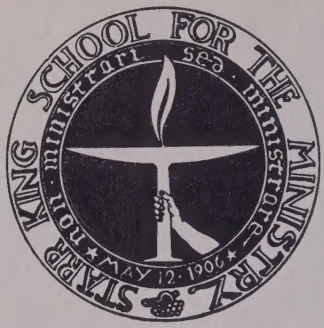
Messages of Faith Hope and Love

James Freeman Clarke



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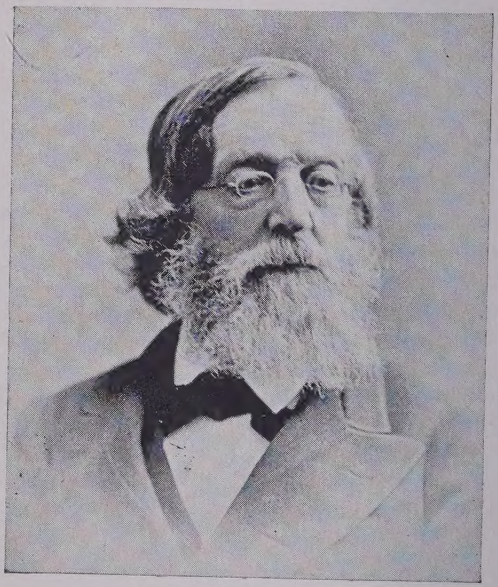

James Freeman Clarke

MESSAGES

OF

FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

Selections

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR FROM THE SERMONS AND WRITINGS OF

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

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PREFACE.

THE sermons from which these selections are taken were written by one who during all his life "abounded in hope," — hope rooted in a faith in the never-failing goodness of a heavenly Father; a faith which grew only stronger and deeper in hours of sorrow and bereavement, one in whom were realized the words of the apostle,—

"Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;

"Love *never faileth.*"

These words, which have brought strength and comfort to those who heard them spoken, are now sent forth as messages to others.

We cordially thank Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., and Lee & Shepard, whose kindness has enabled us to make use of extracts from their publications. A list of these books, with references, will be found at the end of this volume.

L. F. C.

January.

WORK.

January 1.

WHAT a wonderful thing it is that we should be alive! If we live millions of years, nothing can happen to us more wonderful than this,— that we have begun to be, that we are born into this great universe, infinite in extent, everlasting in duration, and filled with the presence of divine power, wisdom, and love. We have been created, by a divine foreknowledge and purpose, to be living souls, capable of knowledge, love, action, progress, goodness, joy. We have been placed in one of the many mansions of our Father's house, to grow up into what he means us to be. This entrance into the universe is such an amazing event that it might easily overwhelm us with its wonder. We are so softly cradled into being that we do not feel the enormous change. But, to make the most of life, we must see this wonder of existence. We must feel what a great, unspeakable gift was bestowed on each of us in that we live.

January 2.

TO get the most out of the coming year, we must put the most into it. And we put the most into it by living in a spirit of *earnestness*, doing with our might what our hand finds to do, not trifling with the golden hours, but receiving each as a precious gift from God. Only such earnest purpose makes the day a blessing, insures progress from good to better, and causes us to live in eternity while we are in time. They are the happiest who value every hour, who put good work into it, who do not procrastinate, who do everything now, and do it as well as it can be done. These make of life a fine art. Such men say each year, in the words of our dear brother and friend: —

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"

So we "redeem the time," so free ourselves from its despotic law of change and decay. When we put all the good we can into the year, we shall get all the good we may out of the year. Each moment of time may thus bring to us a glow and throb of eternal existence, make us inwardly younger as we grow older, until we enter that perfect state of which it is written that "time shall be no longer."

January 3.

THIS is the first thing to remember, if we wish for a happy year,— that pleasure, which comes from without, is evanescent; but happiness, which comes from within, is permanent. Not what we have, but what we are, is the one thing needful. From our own life, being, character, flows true happiness into the heart.

Pleasure comes from transient and successive impulses: happiness flows in a continuous stream. What shall give this continuity to our life? We need some steady purpose, in order not to be swept away by the constant distractions of every day. We ought not to be tossed here and there by the waves of circumstance, not to drift with every chance current, but to steer in a fixed direction. This gives real content. We owe a great deal to daily work; and, if we are not compelled to work, we should seek some regular work to do. Then we have the sense of accomplishment, of going forward, of finishing something. Discontent largely comes from not putting ourselves to some steady business in which we can make progress. Beside the necessary work of every day, it is well to have a plan or useful purpose,— something to do, which we are not compelled to do, outside of the mere routine of life. We see little children with some such object, making a collection of seals or stamps or autographs. That is better than having to say, "What shall I do?" It gives a certain continuity

even to a child's life, and these little enterprises should be encouraged.

January 4.

A HIGHER object than this is to have some permanent study, which shall give unity to the year,— the pursuit of some art or science to which we feel ourselves attracted. Select something,— botany, geology, the study of the habits of birds or animals. Take a period of history, and make it an object to find out all that can be known in regard to it. Every such study widens and opens as we advance. It leads us to higher elevations, to the survey of a broader horizon. It is a spell drawing us on to new vistas of thought and insight. We begin anywhere, and go everywhere. A man who has some special study has so much purpose in his life. He is saved from desultory thought, develops powers of accurate observation. He has a thread of unity in this pursuit which is itself an education of the will, giving concentration, grasp, and persistent determination of character.

One special advantage of such a study is that it takes us out of ourselves, while the pursuit of pleasure ends in self. To put ourselves resolutely into some pursuit outside of mere enjoyment is a check to egotism, and enlarges the soul. This, also, helps to make a happy new year.

January 5.

IN this world all our activity and all our joy come from three sources,— thought, love, work. First, there is intelligence, exercise of intellect, creating our knowledge, giving the power of thinking accurately and justly. There is that inspiration, which all men share more or less, by which a stream of new ideas flows into the mind from some upper source. This is one fountain of human joy. A second source of contentment is work. To be able to exercise our powers, to accomplish something, to bring order out of confusion, to add something to the wealth of the world, this is another great source of satisfaction. And, thirdly, there is love. To be able to go out of ourselves, to sympathize with others, to enter into their needs and perplexities, to help them forward, to enjoy and reverence great qualities of mind and heart, to feel at home in the society and friendship of other minds,— this is another of the essentials of happiness. But, when we have them all united, we have a sort of heaven, even in this life. That is why Paul spoke of sitting in heavenly places with Jesus Christ now.

January 6.

I STAND in the solemn cathedral, with its multitude of chapels, its soaring columns, its interlacing arches, its gorgeous windows, its gloom and glory. Awe falls on my soul

as I remember the prayers, the anthems, the aspirations, which have gone up in this place to God. But no such fear and awe falls on us as when we witness the struggles of a human soul. Then we say: "One stands here greater than the Temple!" "This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven." There is nothing so interesting to man as man. That is why we read novels, forgetting that no such romances were ever invented as exist by our side in human lives. This will be a happy year if we learn in it to find a new interest in our fellow-men.

But for such a work we need a higher inspiration than that of human genius. We must be led by the Spirit. What a peace comes to us when we realize that there is such an inspiration always waiting for us; that we need only to consent to be led, and we shall have given us what to think and say and do! Then we are ready for all occasions; then no duty is too hard, for we have a well of water within the soul perpetually flowing,—a guidance and influence sufficient for all things. Let us remember that we are never asked to do a duty, but that power will be given us with which to do it. This year let us grow in grace Let us lean more and more on this inward inspiration. Let us be sure that this comfort, this light, this guidance, this strength and peace, may always be ours.

The past year has brought many joys and sorrows. It has taken from us dear and noble friends. It has given us great oppor-

tunities. It has brought to us the beauties of nature, the delights of friendship, the glories of an ideal world, inspirations from on high, the movements of human history, the progress of mankind. Let us be grateful for all, and trust in God for the future.

January 7.

ONE of time's laws is that it makes all outward things grow old, decay, and die. All organized beings are subject to the same immutable law. Everything is transient, nothing is permanent.

Everything? No, not everything. The higher nature in man rises above the power of this law of time. It does not grow old, does not decay, cannot die. We all have within us the principle of immortal youth. Thought is always young. Knowledge never grows old. Joy in the beauty of nature, in the work of daily duty, in the divine love, gives to age the charm of childhood.

January 8.

THE world itself is the greatest of all miracles. The year, as it comes and goes, is miraculous all through. Do not allow custom to stale to your mind its infinite variety. It is a miracle when spring and summer awaken all nature to a new life. Every tribe of living things,—insects, the sweet song of summer birds, the tenderness

and grandeur of sky and sea, sunrise and sunset, the abyss of the midnight heavens, the stars in their solemn courses,— all are miracles coming fresh from the infinite abyss of being.

If you would gain the most out of the year, fill your soul with a sense of these wonders; and rejoice, if you have nothing else to be thankful for, for this majestic universe and this divine presence, and for the mysterious life within you which God has given.

January 9.

CONSIDER the life of a man like Agassiz, filled with an enthusiastic desire to know all the secrets of Nature. He, like Paul, never counted himself to have apprehended. He forgot what was behind, and reached out to that which was before. His life was full and rich, and he made the most of it. He worshipped God in the temple of Nature. How happy he was in this immense love for Nature! Nothing was too minute in her works to interest him, for everything was significant. At one end of the scale of human existence stands the man of the world, to whom nothing seems of much importance. At the other end is a man like Agassiz, to whom nothing is *un*important. To him everything which has been made has a meaning. Thus he lives in a world in which he sees nothing insignificant.

Genius, like piety, calls nothing common or unclean.

January 10.

THIS, then, is the first rule for making the most of life: *Forget yourself in some interest outside of yourself.* He who is turned inward, thinking of himself, admiring himself, complaining that he is ill-treated; he who thinks he ought to have more of the rewards of life,— he is the one who does not begin to live. Life is born out of communion,— communion with God, Nature, man. "We only live," says the philosopher Fichte, "we only live when we love!" How true that is! We must be interested in something in order to be alive, and no one can take a great deal of interest in himself. Looking in the glass is an unprofitable occupation.

But, you may say, we cannot be all inspired apostles or great philosophers. No; but the motive, the principle, which made their lives rich, we can have in ours.

January 11.

THINK also this, — that each of us has been created for a special work, that each is an essential part of the great whole, and that, as the soul is unfolded and we are developed more and more, we shall find ourselves here for a special mission. Let us not think lightly of our destiny. Christ, it is said, was "before Abraham" in the purpose of God. He was foreordained, before the foundation of the world, to be the savior of mankind. But each of us was also fore-

ordained before the foundation of the world. To one God gives ten talents, to another five, to another one; but the man who has one talent is not to hide it in the ground, for it is his Lord's money, not his. So each of us is an integral part of God's world. If we are faithful in the least, we shall be made faithful in much. Put your two mites into God's treasury this coming year.

January 12.

EVERY soul is a unit in the sight of God. Every soul is a seed to be unfolded according to its own law, to grow up in all things into what God meant it to be.

This year, then, let us each endeavor to grow,— to grow according to the law of our own being; to be our best selves, and so to find out our own strength and weakness. To be true to ourselves; to be faithful to the light God gives us; not to be moulded by fashion, but to stand on our own feet,— this gives every one some strength, some power to do good. In order to give, we must have. In order to help others, we must be something ourselves.

And then, having something of our own, let us give. Let the life which God sends to our own mind and heart go forth freely to find other minds and hearts. Do good, hoping for nothing again, satisfied that it is blessing enough to be able to bless others, and that it is more blessed to give than to receive. What

a happy New Year it will be to us if its hours, as they come and go, find us not minding our own good solely, but also the good and joy of others! Let us educate ourselves to think of what others need, of what will sweeten life to them. Let us acquire those habits of kindly action and kindly speech, that aroma of good will which sends joy and strength into other hearts.

January 13.

WHENEVER our soul touches the divine essence which fills nature and life, and is not far from any one of us, which includes us all, we escape the penalties of time and sense. Every moment in which we obey the law of right and deny a temptation to do wrong translates us out of time into eternity. Then we come in contact with God. Every throb of disinterested love, every sincere struggle to do good, makes us, as the apostle says, "partakers of the divine nature." This is why Jesus says, "He who believes in me shall never die," and "He who believes in me has everlasting life abiding in him." But he meant by this, faith in that divine truth and love which dwelt in him, that heavenly spirit which was incarnate in him, that nobleness of soul which made him Immanuel, God with us. For God comes to us in every such holy, pure, and generous nature, and most of all in Jesus, because his life was most full of God.

In order to be forever young, we must have

this life which is "hid with Christ in God,"— this life in two worlds, the world of time and that of eternity. If we live only in the world of time, we are subject always to decay and loss. That is why some men seem never to soften or to expand; they pass through a long experience, and learn nothing by it; they repeat forever the faults and mistakes of the past.

But others live in two worlds,— that of sense and time, that of soul and eternity. No event to them is simply material, no fact merely physical. There is a meaning in it all,— an intelligent purpose, a divine wisdom. So the best of what happens to them enters into them, and becomes part of themselves. They drink at the fountain of perpetual youth.

January 14.

YOU can put into a minute of time only just so much manual labor; but you can add to the same minute thought and love. It is the action of the higher human powers which lengthen life, which turn an hour into a day and one year into ten. Some of the greatest souls who have lighted up the earth have had a short life, if measured by years, but how long, if we consider the number of their great endeavors and accomplishments.

Not only genius, but goodness, lengthens our days. How long are the lives of those generous souls who live for others! Most of us each day think of what we can get or do

for ourselves; but there are those who acquire the habit of helping others, of comforting, of adding cheerfulness and strength, wherever they go. To those who thus give much is given in return,— contentment, trust in God, confidence in their fellow-men, sweet hopes, peaceful memories.

To fill life full, you must open it upwards toward truth, beauty, goodness. Mere excitement is not life; for all excitements weary, and are succeeded by depression. The hard routine of work into which no love and no thought enter, and which is done from necessity, not duty, leaves us in a lethargy. In order to "redeem time," we must look up, and not down. Seeking things below takes our strength out of us: waiting on the Lord for his higher gifts renews our strength day by day.

January 15.

WHEN one is dangerously sick, it is common for religious persons to inquire whether he is *prepared to die*. We feel — and feel rightly — that, before such a momentous change, it is important to be prepared. One wishes to arrange his affairs, to make his will, to take leave of his friends, to forgive his enemies and to ask their forgiveness, to finish any work which he has begun, to leave some token of affection with those he loves, to do some good to those who depend on him and whom he can help; lastly, to make his peace with God, and to give his heart

in prayer, submission, penitence, and faith to the Almighty.

This is all natural and right. But all this would be better if it were done while we live, and for the sake of life,— not merely when we are about to die. Let us, therefore, see how we can set our house in order, that we may live.

This command is for all of us. God says to each of us to-day, "Set thy house in order, for thou shalt live." Life is the serious thing, and we have to live. Death is serious, but life more so. We have no responsibility about dying, but a great deal about living. When we live, we take up our own work, and have our own lot to choose. We fall into our *own* hands every morning.

January 16.

BUT besides the house of affairs there is also the house of the thoughts to be set in order. Many people wait till they are about to die before they think at all on the most important subjects of thought. Then into the confusion of a sick man's brain they try to introduce order, and to arrange a creed.

We need a clear and systematic belief to live by, not to die by. We need it to save us from hesitation and uncertainty when the time of action comes. We need it to guide others who are in doubt; to see all events that occur in the holy light of Christianity; to see sorrow and trial glorified by a divine

love; to *comprehend* with all saints what is the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of God.

January 17.

THEN there is the house of the affections to be set in order, and this ought to be done while we live.

Many wait till they are about to die before they look into their heart to see what is there. Then they find how cold their love has been to their friends; how they have neglected opportunities of showing affection and good will; how, absorbed in selfish thoughts and pursuits, they have not thought of the happiness of others. In the stillness of the sick-chamber, as they look back, how empty their years seem of good! What return have they made for the exceeding love of parents, of husband, of wife, of brother and sister, of friends? Love has been showered on them like sunlight; but, as the sunlight falls on the inaccessible summit of some frozen Alpine peak, so it has fallen on their hearts, leaving them unmelted into any tenderness. "Oh," they cry, "If I could only set this house in order, if I could only have time to *love* as I ought those who have loved me so well! But it is too late now!" What bitterness is in that thought! But the bitterness is wholesome; and it often happens that the man who has been cold and hard through life softens in his last days, and in his sick-chamber, into

an unspeakable tenderness and gentleness of spirit. And such is the nature of the human heart that these last hours of unproductive tenderness seem to atone for all the hard years that preceded them; and the wife and children remember him as he was in his dying room, and say, "That was himself, that was his true life." But is it well to waste fifty years in cold, hard, self-folded indifference, and to set the house of the heart in order only when just about to go away? Would it not be better to have a little thoughtful love spread over each day? a few kind words uttered every morning and every evening, some little acts of good will to refresh life all along its route?

January 18.

WE also need to set in order the house of the Spirit. This preparation, more than any other, is apt to be left to the hour of death. Men about to die bethink them of making their peace with God, and turn to religion. Then for the first time they remember that they are sinners, and ask for pardon. Then first they feel their own weakness, and pray for help. It is good to do so. It is good to pass through this experience *then*, if one has never had it before.

But how much better it is to set in order the house of the Spirit all through life! Religion, true religion, is to help us to *live* nobly, truly, generously. It is to enable us

to perform every-day duties faithfully, to endure common trials patiently.

We need religion, we need the sense of a divine presence and a divine love, to enable us to be true and faithful in this world. We need forgiveness for *this* life, not for the life to come.

Let us, then, set our house in order, that we may live; the house of our affairs, that we may act efficiently and usefully; the house of our thoughts, that we may see clearly what to do and how to do it; the house of our affections, that we may shed warm sunshine around us, on all hearts near us; the house of our soul, that, being led by God and inspired by him, we may have his peace in our souls evermore, and live his eternal life.

January 19.

"DO the nearest duty!" We are often told that this is a good maxim to follow in our daily life.

While we ought to *begin* with the duties which are laid upon us by circumstances and the recurrent necessities of life, it does not follow that we are to *remain* there. The nearest duty may take another form, and become that nearest to our ability, that which we are most fit to do. The customary routine of life is an excellent support, a good thing to lean upon; but we must not be enslaved by it. No one can dispense with routine, but we must sometimes rise above it.

The danger in this maxim is that it may lead to narrowness, to moving in a rut, caring for no one outside of our own circle, taking no interest in the concerns of humanity around us.

The nearest duty may be that which is not nearest in space or time, but in heart and life.

January 20.

"LET the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Dreamy meditators on the past, active strivers in the present, hopeful prophets of the future, preach, all of you, the kingdom of God by faith, by hope, by love. As time and all of its works, possessions, joys, is passing rapidly away, secure that which is unchanging and eternal. Have faith in God,—faith, not opinions or dead belief, but faith; faith which learns to see God present in nature, present in providence, present in the soul, which finds him in all changes, him in all joys and sorrows, him in the near duty of the hour, him in the large vision of the ages. Have hope, active hope, which shall enable you to work in the cause of justice and humanity; to work, though in a minority; to work, though no success or reputation seems to come to you. Work, not merely conscientiously, but hopefully, and you will work successfully. Hope to do some good thing for some one. Hope to make joy and peace

where you go and where you stay. Hope to serve God by serving man.

And, most of all, have *love*. If there is any bitterness in your heart toward any human being, root it out. It is a corroding poison in your soul. Get rid of it. Love: that is, go out of yourself; go forth in sympathy with others; go forth to do them good by the power of God in your own soul, by the grace of God in your own heart. By your own hope of a grand future lift others out of their scepticism, their doubts, their despair. These things shall last. They shall not pass away. Nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Faith, hope, and love, the heavenly sisters, the three Christian graces, like, yet unlike,—these three shall cause that you be not barren nor unfruitful. Begin life so, and it will pass joyfully to its close.

January 21.

PROGRESS in the sense of acquisition is something, but progress in the sense of being is a great deal more. To grow higher, deeper, wider as the years go on, to conquer difficulties, and acquire more and more power, to feel all one's faculties unfolding, and truth descending into the soul,—this makes life worth living.

Education, in the true sense, is not mere instruction. It is the unfolding of the whole human nature. It is growing up in all things

to our highest possibility. This is a life-work,— a work in which our teachers are the heavens and the earth, day and night, work and rest, nature and society, heavenly inspirations and human sympathies, success and failure, sickness, pain, bereavement, all of this great human life. And with all this teaching there must be the earnest desire and purpose in our own soul to grow, to become larger, deeper, higher, nobler year by year.

January 22.

THESE things may teach us the grandeur of our lives. Vast principles are involved in all that we do or omit to do each day. Every day we rise to a great career, a grand opportunity. Into the smallest word and act we may put the most divine spirit. We may walk every day into heaven as we walk down the street or we may walk into hell. If we resolve on a noble and generous direction of our life, angels and archangels, holy and pure spirits, will be our companions and inward monitors.

January 23.

A SINGLE act of genuine, sincere, thorough-going fidelity raises us at once to a higher plane; and our whole life proceeds henceforth by a nobler, manlier measure.

We have all seen instances of this. We have known men make what seemed a hard sacrifice for duty; but after that hour their mind, heart, and whole nature were elevated and ennobled, they were henceforth new creatures. A genuine good action has a transforming efficacy on the character. We are not the same afterwards as before. Pray for the opportunity of doing such an act; pray for the chance of making some great sacrifice, or, rather, find such an opportunity for yourself. Look for it, for it is very nigh thee now. Angel opportunities come to us every day, and we entertain them unawares.

January 24.

HOW many noble enterprises there are in this community to which men and women are devoting time, thought, strength, heart, life, and only ask of us a little sympathy and a little aid! Some labor for the poor, some for the children who have no homes nor friends, some for those who have fallen into temptation, some for the poor animals, mute sufferers, unable to complain of their wrongs, some for neglected infants, some for aged people left alone in the world, some for young men thrown amid the risks of a great city. All they ask of us is to help them in their work; but how many of us think that, on the whole, we are not our brother's keeper!

January 25.

THE Lord never meant that we should make of our immediate and daily work prison walls to shut ourselves in, so as to take no part in the vast interests of humanity. Every man stands under an arch of heaven, infinite in extent, with the constellations of the universe lighting their solemn fires above him every night, and the unwearied sun marching over his head every day. We all belong to the whole of God's world, and nothing which concerns it ought to find us indifferent. When we walk in the woods, the sweet breath of the ferns takes us back to past geologic ages; the fragrance of the firs and pines recall the Psalms of David and the hymns of the Vedas. "Over us soars the eternal sky, full of light and of Deity." It is not meant that we should live to ourselves: we are all called on to live for every truth, every human interest, every human need, as the Lord sends them to us or sends us to them.

January 26.

A CHILD beginning to walk takes every step by a separate act of will. Beginning to read, he looks at every letter. After a while he walks and reads by a habit which has become involuntary.

So, also, it is with man's moral and spiritual nature. By practice he forms habits, requiring no exercise of will except at the be-

ginning of the series of acts. The law of association does the rest.

To him who hath shall be given. As voluntary acts are transformed into habits, the will is set free to devote itself to higher efforts and larger attainments. After giving to good objects for a while from principle, we give without any effort. Self-control becomes habitual. We rule over our spirit, repress ill-temper, keep down bad feelings, first by an effort, afterwards with ease.

If it were not for some such law of accumulation as this, the work of life would have to be begun forever anew. Formation of character would be impossible. We should be incapable of progress, our whole strength being always employed in battling with our first enemies, learning evermore anew our earliest lessons.

This is the reward of all virtue, the punishment of all wrong-doing, that right and wrong actions gradually harden into character. The reward of the good man is that, having chosen truth and pursued it, it becomes at last a part of his own nature, a happy companion of all his life. The comdemnation of the bad man is that, when light has come into the world, he has chosen darkness; and so the light within him becomes darkness.

January 27.

THE highest graces of all — faith, hope, and love — obey the same law. By trusting in God when we hardly see him at

all, we come at last to realize, as by another sense, his divine presence in all things. By praying to him when we can only say, "O God,— if there be a God,— save my soul, if I have a soul," we at last learn to talk with this heavenly friend just as we would with an earthly friend; and as, on a summer's day, when we sit among the pines, though we do not see the wind nor know whence it cometh or whither it goeth, we yet hear its gentle voice above our heads, and feel its cool breath on our cheek, so, though we do not know how God answers prayer, we have the sense of strength, of content, of kindly purpose, of love, joy, and peace, making our whole life useful to others and satisfactory to ourselves. So faith in God, at first an effort, at last becomes instinctive.

Thus, too, faith in immortality solidifies into an instinct. As we live from and for infinite, divine, eternal realities, these become a part of our knowledge. Socrates did not convince himself of his immortality so much by his arguments; but, by spending a long life in intimate converse with the highest truths and noblest ends, he at last reached the point where he could not help believing in immortality. As the pure in heart see God, so the pure in heart also see immortality. Death fades away, and becomes nothing. "He who believes in me," said Jesus, "cannot die." "He who enters into my thoughts sympathizes with my purposes, partakes of my spirit, knows that death is nothing." Thus it is that Christ abolishes death. The

true resurrection is rising with Christ to a higher life. As the apostle says, "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above."

The moral of all this is evident. Every man, every woman, every child, has some talent, some power, some opportunity of gaining good and doing good. Each day offers us some occasion of using this talent. As we use it, it gradually increases, improves, becomes native to the character. As we neglect it, it dwindles, withers, and disappears. This is the stern but benign law by which we live. This makes character real and enduring; this makes progress possible; this turns virtue into goodness, and men into angels.

January 28.

THE nearest duty may sometimes be to ourselves, to make ourselves fit and able to be of use to others.

Before the mechanic begins his work, no matter how important it is, his first duty is to sharpen his tools and put them in order. So it may be our first duty to put our body and mind in order before we begin any other duty, however necessary. We often say we have no time to rest, no time for recreation, no time for reading, no time for outside interests, no time for church work, our business is so pressing, we have so much to do. Men refuse to give themselves a little relaxation: and so they break down at last, and then can do no work for months or years.

January 29.

SOMETIMES it is the soul which needs to be put in order before we can do any duty as we ought. If the soul is sick, we shall put no heart into anything we do. To finish any work well, we must have faith, courage, confidence, and be able to put our heart into it. But, if the heart is cold and dead, we shall do everything in a cold and dead way. The nearest duty, therefore, may be to take care of our mind, our heart, and our soul. To come into the presence of God, to give ourselves up to him, to begin a new life of obedience, faith, submission, patience, hope,—this may be our nearest duty.

January 30.

THE best way to escape many difficulties which beset us on a lower plane is to go up to a higher one. It is sometimes easier to to go up than to stand still where we are. In climbing a precipitous rock, if you stop, you may grow dizzy, and be in danger of falling; but, if you push upward, you are safe. So sometimes, if you find it hard to do your duty, try to *do more*, not less. Adopt a higher standard, go up to a higher ground. There you have more motive, purer air, better inspiration. If it is hard to be a moderately good Christian, try to become a better one: you will often find that easier. To give yourself *wholly* to what is true and good is easier than

to halt between two opinions. When you try to compromise between right and wrong, to be *moderately* just, to be truthful to a certain extent, and religious without ceasing to be worldly, it is a hard matter. But, if we say, "We will do *whatsoever* things are just, *whatsoever* things are true, *whatsoever* things are noble," it simplifies the matter.

January 31

THE power of Jesus over the human heart has been just here. He saw the evil of man, but also saw his good. He saw that man is a sinner, but knew that his sin is an alien element, not natural to him. Jesus appealed to his better nature. Men of the world assume that man is essentially selfish, and to be moved by selfish considerations. But Christianity has called on him to make sacrifices; and he has denied himself, taken up his cross, and followed his Master to the ends of the world, seeking to save souls. Man is sensual, fond of ease, fond of pleasure; but, at the voice of Christ, he has renounced the world, and devoted strength and life to heroic labors for his Master. Man loves to get and keep money; but Christ has taught him to find a higher pleasure in using it generously for great purposes. Jesus, because he has said to us, "Go up higher," has infused a new element into the world.

February.

PRAYER.

February 1.

NO man can work to much purpose unless he has peace within, unless the centre of the soul be calm and serene. Therefore, Jesus says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Jesus gives us rest by giving us a sense of an infinite love around us and within us, of a perfect providence watching over us, of a fulness of goodness in the universe. He makes us feel that life is worth living; that every day is a new and sacred gift sent us direct from God; that God has hidden in every hour unseen, mysterious blessings; that we gain good and do good even when we do not know it.

February 2.

HE who labors for man, with no faith in God, labors to little good. He who worships God without serving man worships

to little good. Sleep and wakefulness, passive life and active life, faith and works, piety and morality, love to God and love to man,— these are the great polar forces of physical, mental, and moral life, which act and react on each other, and keep us in a healthy condition.

February 3.

WE must sometimes rest even from duty and effort; but the true rest to refresh conscience and spirit is to come near to God in nature or the Bible or the closet of prayer. Work and prayer should alternate like day and night in the Christian life. There are two spheres — one of duty, the other of devotion — into which man needs alternately to go. They ought not to be confused. They are distinct. When a man says, "To work is to pray," he confuses them. To work is not to pray: it is to work. When a man makes prayer his work, and gives his life, like the monks of Paganism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity, to an abstract, mystical devotion, he confuses them. You cannot work well, except you stop working sometimes and pray. You cannot pray well, unless you stop praying sometimes to work.

February 4.

HERE is a man harassed with anxiety and care about his business, about his health, about his family. Here is a woman

harassed with care about her sick child. They both think they ought to be anxious: they try to be anxious. They never throw off the burden, and go into God's glad presence, giving up all care and anxiety. They should give all their thought for a time to their duties, put their whole heart into them, and then rest in God's blessed love, and cast all their cares on him who cares for them. Thus could they work better, and conquer their difficulties better; for care and anxiety unnerve the soul, and to try to live in anxiety is like trying to live without sleep.

February 5.

I MUST stand still each day, and think of what God has done for me,— how he has blessed me with home, friends, love, opportunity of knowledge, and rich influences of culture. I must consider how he has sent to me wise teachers and generous, loving hearts to stand by me amid the storms of life. I must remember how he has put dear little children in my arms, and wise and holy men and women near me; how he has borne with me in my wilfulness and pride and folly, and restrained me from going into irremediable evil; how, when I have prayed, because I could not do any longer without prayer, he has hastened to meet my ignorant supplication, and answered it, oh, so sweetly! filling my soul down to its very depths with the peace of God passing all understanding.

February 6.

IF you have any trial which seems intolerable, pray,—pray that it be relieved or changed. We may pray for anything, not wrong in itself, with perfect freedom, if we do not pray selfishly. One disabled from duty by sickness may pray for health, that he may do his work; or one hemmed in by internal impediments may pray for utterance, that he may serve better the truth and the right. Or, if we have a besetting sin, we may pray to be delivered from it, in order to serve God and man, and not be ourselves Satans to mislead and destroy. But the answer to the prayer may be, as it was to Paul, not the removal of the thorn, but, instead, a growing insight into its meaning and value. The voice of God in our soul may show us, as we look up to him, that his strength is enough to enable us to bear it.

February 7.

RABIA.

RABIA, sick upon her bed,
By two saints was visited,—

Holy Malik, Hassan wise,—
Men of mark in Moslem eyes.

Hassan said, "Whose prayer is pure
Will God's chastisements endure."

Malik, from a deeper sense,
Uttered his experience:

"He who loves his Master's choice
Will in chastisement *rejoice*."

Rabia saw some selfish will
In their maxims lingering still,

And replied, "O men of grace,
He who sees his Master's face

"Will not in his prayer recall
That he is chastised at all!"

From the German of Tholuck.

February 8.

WE pray against our besetting sin. But God may answer this prayer, not by removing the temptation, but by giving us more confidence in him, more sense of his pardoning love in Christ, more steadfast reliance, more of habitual living with God. Instead of removing the temptation, God and Christ come and dwell with us. "Most gladly, therefore, we glory in our infirmities, that the peace of Christ may rest upon us." God does not take away the Red Sea, nor the wilderness, nor Jordan, but goes with us through them all,—a cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night. Nothing brings us so near to God as the sense of our spiritual and moral needs.

The world advances through shadow as well as through sunshine. The heart grows great and noble by manfully meeting and bearing the trials of life. When we are weak, then we are strong.

February 9.

TO cure sin is not so easy as many suppose. Restraint will not do it; punishment will not do it; fear will not do it. These are only John the Baptists going before the Lord. Love must do it,— Christian love, which takes men by the hand and helps them. Till the churches and society are ready to do this, there can be no reformation for society.

Out of the heart are the issues of life. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. What shall fill the heart with pure thoughts, noble desires, generous aspirations? What shall purify it from evil wishes and low imaginations?

The only way to get rid of bad thoughts is to have good ones: the only way to control bad feelings is to cherish pure and generous ones. Truth only can drive out error. You must love your enemy if you would not hate him.

February 10.

SO life goes on. Let us live it as we ought, standing still from time to time, to see and consider God's works, and then go out to serve him, standing in our place, and always loyal and faithful at our place. God sends times for work and times for consideration. He sends us homes where we may rest and consider. He sends calm evening and dewy night, the companionship of wise and loving hearts, and the peace of this holy

day. Into these oratories of thought, love, and prayer, let us go to consider and ponder: and then let us go forth to do the great will of the Master, and let life be better for our being in it; and when we are old, if God grants us to be old, we shall look from that mountain top of age into the promised land of a rejoicing and happy future.

February 11.

BUT how shall we always remember to do what we can? Who ever does all he can? We are not always in the right mood, not always in the best temper. The power may be there, but the spirit may be wanting. How, then, shall we learn to use opportunities, and not neglect them, not pass them by?

Here, as always, come in the need and the help of Christian faith. Faith not only leads to work, but the effort to work leads to faith. Always the deepest religious experience is born of the strongest moral purpose. Whenever men seriously try to do right, they feel the need of some help from on high. If a man should say to me, I do not believe in religion: I believe in morality. If I do right, I believe that is enough, I should answer, I believe so, too. Now go to work in earnest to do right and to be good. Begin every day with a determination not to omit any opportunity. Watch and see if you fail. Do not drift, but steer. I think you will find religion a necessary help to enable you to meet

your own standard. The sense of God's presence, his influence, his readiness to give you good thoughts and good inspirations, will lead to the best morality.

It was a great purpose in the life of Jesus to show us that we can have that help, have it now, have it always. His gospel is the revelation to the soul of an ever-present love, waiting to be gracious. "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocks it shall be opened." Every one! Then it is a *law* that prayer is answered. It is not a caprice, but a divine method, sure and certain as any law of nature. The law of gravitation is not more unerring and constant than the law which ordains that whenever one cries to the Father, asking spiritual help, the spiritual help is given.

February 12.

IF, then, we have these opportunities to meet every day; if we are so apt to pass them by; if it is so hard to be in the right spirit; if, without such a right spirit, we are sure to do what we ought not, and to omit to do what we ought,— then we are like the little hungry child, who needs food and cannot get it for himself. Will not God certainly feed our soul with inward strength if we believe enough in him to go to him? I believe that this is a universal law. I do not think that

any one, wishing to do right, and finding it hard to do so, but will certainly find himself lifted to a higher plane by simply looking up, and saying, "O my Father, feed my soul with thy light and thy love." He will find that he is able to say the right thing at the right time, to do the right thing, to be in the right tone and temper. Whereas before he was apt to be irritable, now he is patient; before he was thoughtless, now he is considerate; before he was forgetful of others, now he remembers them. There has come into the depths of his soul a power to direct his thoughts and words and actions aright. And this is what is meant by the influence of the Spirit. It is felt in its results and fruits,—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

February 13.

IF, then, we do not wish to have a life full of lost opportunities, we must be every day prepared to meet them. And, as we cannot prepare ourselves sufficiently by any amount of discipline or any strength of determination, we have a right to believe that, by looking up and opening our soul to God, he will give us the power of meeting each opportunity aright.

Without this faith, how sure we are to postpone any difficult work; to say, "I will do it at a more convenient season." But, with this confidence in an ever-present help, we can

meet every occasion; and we shall be able to understand the meaning of the Christian paradox, "When I am weak, then am I strong," or that other saying of the apostle, "The life I live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God."

February 14.

FOR here in truth, to my mind, lie the emphasis and essence of Christ's teaching. He leads us, through the law to the gospel, through duty to trust, through work to prayer, through the sense of responsibility to the sense of dependence. Christian faith is not a doctrine or a ritual, not a system of ethics or an emotion of piety, not profession or form. It is the law of God fulfilled by faith in the love of God. It is inflowing strength with which to do our daily work. It is the happy consciousness that God is around us with his perpetual care, beneath us with his supreme power, above us with his providential blessing, within us with his constant inspiration. This faith is the saving faith. It saves us from doubt and despair. It fills the heart with hope. It causes each day to dawn serene and peaceful, each night to close quiet and full of content. Trials may come, will come, lonely hours, the loss of those we love, disappointed hopes. But with these trials strength also will come with which to bear them. More than this, we may go wrong. We may neglect and forget opportunities. We may forget to pray, and then we shall

find ourselves relapsing into the old routine of weakness and sin. But with this difference,—that we know the way to return. We know that we have only to turn round and begin again, with a greater humility and distrust of ourselves, with a greater trust in God, and that the sense of his forgiving love will descend once more into our hearts. For forgiveness, too, comes not by caprice, but by law. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Observe, not "He is merciful," but "He is faithful and just." It is, then, a law that, when we are willing to look our sins in the face, and see ourselves as we are, with that sight and confession of evil we are helped out of the evil into good.

This is the sum and substance of personal religion. This is the "life hid with Christ in God." It is the steady purpose of doing what we can in the direction of duty, and the steady trust in God for power with which to do it. Either of the two alone is not enough. But, joined together, they are sufficient to lift us above the danger of lost opportunities.

February 15.

I BELIEVE that work may be a sacrament by which the divine grace may be mediated; that love may descend into the soul by means of labor; that duty may be the step upward into piety; that we may be full of God while engaged in our daily work; and

that what is often called mere morality may be the natural way to an inward spiritual life.

Thus may the grace of God which brings salvation come to those who are seeking to serve their fellow-man. Work may lead us into prayer. We may learn to pray, not as a duty, not as a sentiment, not from sympathy, not for our own salvation, not by an intellectual piety, but because we need the help of God to do what we want to do for man.

There is work which can be done, perhaps, without God,—mechanical work, routine work. But, whenever an occasion occurs in which we wish to help others, we may throw ourselves on the help of God. We may then say to God: "My Father, I am here, ready to do anything I can. Show me how to do it." And then, by some sure but mysterious law, the way is opened, the help comes. We see then that, as faith leads to work, so, also, work may lead to faith.

February 16.

THIS is the new form of piety which is to be, the Christ which is to come. It is the piety coming from work as a sacrament, the religious form of duty. The moment we undertake any really Christian work we need this kind of piety. Here, for instance, is a young girl who takes a class in a Sunday-school. She desires not merely to hear children repeat lessons from the Bible, but to

lead them to God. She wishes to put into their soul some principle by which they can be kept safe amid the trials and temptations which may come to them. But how can she ever do such a great work? She feels wholly inadequate to the task. She is discouraged when she thinks of it. Therefore, she may very likely give it up, and say she is not fit to be a teacher, that she does not know how, that she is not good enough, and the like. But suppose she believed that, whenever we wish to do any Christian work for others, power will come to us if we ask for it. Then, instead of giving up her class, she will simply ask before each meeting that God may help her to do them real good; and, if she finds that prayer always answered, she will go on with increasing courage and faith.

February 17.

GOD gives into our hands the keys with which we may open heaven to others. Not to Peter alone, not to the apostles alone, but to all of us, he says, "*What ye bind on earth* shall be bound in heaven; what ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Whenever we are faithful to our convictions, true to the light God shows to us, unselfish and generous, then we open the gateway of heaven to those who are with us. Whenever we are selfish and unbelieving and hard, we shut the gateway. The spirit we are in inevitably communicates itself by our voice and

tone, and preaches to others truth, generosity, humility, faith, or preaches unbelief, selfishness, doubt, despair. Influence goes from us, at every moment, for good or evil. We say, by our state of mind, that there is something real in truth, in virtue, in love; that immortality is not a dream; that heaven is close at hand; that life is rich in great opportunities. We say this every moment, when we are in a right state of mind; and, in saying this, we unlock heaven to others, and lead them in. Or we say to others, by our formality, by our coldness, by our self-seeking, that religion is empty; that Christianity is only a name; that life is a weariness; that all things are vanity; that love is an illusion; that the gospel is a cheat and a lie. And, saying this, we lock the doors of heaven; we turn away from God those who are seeking him; we make infidels and sceptics; we corrupt innocent and childlike hearts by our worldliness. Such eternal consequences follow our trivial earthly action. So it is that what we bind *on earth* is bound in heaven, that what we loose on earth is loosed in heaven.

February 18.

PERHAPS you are asked to be a visitor to the poor. This is a difficult duty. To go as a friend, not as a patron; to help, and not to harm; to make them feel that you are a brother or a sister, not an official visitor; to say the right thing, the wisest thing; to put a

new spirit of faith, hope, cheer, confidence, into their hearts,— who can do this by any power of his own? But, if we believe that there is a divine law, working as regularly as the laws of physics and chemistry, by which prayer gives us power which we should not have unless we prayed, then we can go to any task, however difficult, with courage and faith.

How we shrink from going to see one in terrible distress,— one on whom an awful calamity has fallen! We say: "What can I do? I can do nothing." But, if we believed that God would certainly give us power to say the right word, to pour life and comfort into that heart, if we asked for such power, then we should go instantly and cheerfully, because we should not go in our own strength, but relying on God.

I am often called to see the dying or the bereaved. Once I was afraid to go, would postpone it till I could think of the right thing to say. Now I go at once, because I know that the right thing will be given me in that hour. And the promise of the Master seems to be verified: "Take no thought what to say or speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye ought to say."

February 19.

JESUS says: "If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it. Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." Again he says that God will give all things when we ask in

the name of Christ. Now, to "ask in the name of Christ" is not to use the word "Christ." It is not merely to say, "We ask it through Jesus Christ." It is to ask in the spirit of Christ. But the spirit of Christ is that which does good to others. When we wish to do good to others, we are in the spirit of Christ. If we pray for power to help others, we are praying in the name of Christ. Then we may ask anything, and be sure that it will be done. Some power, faith, love, and wisdom will come to us by which to help others.

Thus may piety be born of duty, and work be a sacrament helping us to come into the love of God. Other kinds of piety are good, but this may be the best of all. The piety is good which comes to the human soul through churches and worship, through sympathy and communion, through the sense of sin and the sense of forgiveness, through intellectual aspiration scaling the heights of universal law. But possibly the best of all may be the faith born of work, the piety which comes through duty, the prayer which is made for power to help our fellow-men.

This piety which is born out of morality will have this advantage. It will come nearer than any other to the prayer without ceasing. As these Christian duties come, not on Sunday only, but all through the week, this will be a piety for all the working hours of life. As we see the results of this prayer, our faith will be continually growing stronger.

No doubt, all forms of piety are meant to

be united. The time will come in which we shall meet God in the church and also in the street, in the communion of saints and in the loneliness of the agony of the Garden, in the depths of spiritual thought and the daily life of duty. All will be steps of Jacob's ladder leading up to heaven, on which the angels of God will go up to carry prayers, and come down to bring blessings.

February 20.

IN piety and prayer we ought to begin at the beginning. It is a curious fact that the Church has often taught that men must begin at the end. Eminent theologians have said that one must not pray at all until converted and regenerate. Some unregenerate persons prayed to Christ when he was in the world, and he answered their prayer. The Roman centurion, who worshipped Jupiter and Mars, the woman of Phœnicia,— these prayed to Jesus; and he helped them. Many persons are taught to believe that they cannot pray aright until they are miraculously transformed and renewed. But Paul says, "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." Natural prayer must precede spiritual. Begin by seeing God in nature, in providence, in life. Begin by saying: "God help me!" "I thank thee, O Father!" "God forgive me!" So a habit of prayer is formed, growing purer, loftier, more constant, more prevailing, more spiritual. It

will be pervaded with the spirit of brotherhood and charity. God asks no service of us that he is not ready to help us to perform. He asks nothing but what it is good for us to do. And our first duty, under the gospel of Christ, is not to be afraid of God. The power of the gospel consists in enabling us to say, Abba, Father. When it has taught us to say that, it has done its work. It has then converted us, and made us like little children; and so we can see the kingdom of heaven.

February 21.

THE law of *vis inertiæ* implies that, where there is the most power at last, there is the most difficulty at first. We cannot, then, expect that this great Christian faith in God, goodness, immortality, heaven, is to come without effort and struggle. We do not acquire this faith by reading books of theology or by a process of reasoning. It grows up by a long experience; it is developed by a continued discipline. As life goes on, our faith ought to grow deeper. We first believe in God and Christ and the future life, because these seem reasonable beliefs. But, as we live in them and from them, they become more and more real and certain. We learn by degrees to feel the presence of God in Nature and in our own soul; we learn to have more and more faith in Christ as our great helper; we learn to pray more and more in spirit and truth. The prayer of form

is easy: the prayer of faith is one of the greatest efforts of which the human mind is capable.

The law of inertia, therefore, seems to apply, not only in the physical order, but in the moral and spiritual order, too. It helps us to keep what we gain. It preserves the moral and spiritual forces. It is the secret of progress. It is the condition of the great ascent of man from earth to heaven, from good to better, from imperfect truth and goodness to that which is unchanging and eternal.

February 22.

BIRTHDAY OF WASHINGTON.

SUCH souls never die: they only go out of sight. "Dying, behold they live!" Their souls have passed into the heart of the nation. Death transforms them from an individual power among us into a universal presence within us. So Washington has gone into the nation's life.

February 23.

THERE are three main conditions of acceptable and availing prayer, according to the New Testament: One, that it shall be "in truth," or sincere; *i.e.*, that we shall ask for what we really wish to have. Second, that it should be "in spirit," — *i.e.*, in the

right spirit, in a Christian spirit; that is, again, that we should ask for what we ought to wish to have. Thirdly, that it should be "in faith"; that we should ask, believing that God will give it to us. Let us look at each of these conditions.

A prayer, to be good for anything, ought to be "in truth." It ought to be sincere. We ought to ask for what we really wish. A great deal of prayer, especially of public prayer, is not sincere, and therefore is not true prayer. Listen to the prayers made in the pulpit. They are the prayers of saints, petitions for the highest spiritual blessings, utterances of the loftiest aspirations of which man is capable. But they are not offered by saints: the majority of the congregation are not saints, but sinners. Yet a lofty spiritual prayer, like the prayers in most churches and most religious books, is good to hear and read, because it lifts the soul. But I think the reason why it is so hard to join sincerely in most of the prayers uttered in church is that they go too high: they express not what we really wish, but what we think we ought to wish.

Now, if we pray to God at all, we ought to say what we ourselves feel and think and desire, not what apostles and prophets and saints and angels feel and desire.

Pray more or pray less, as your needs impel you. Only, *when* you pray, pray in spirit and in truth. Ask God for what you really want. Do not say a word until you can really put your heart into it.

February 24.

THE rest of the Lord's Day is not outward but inward,—a rest from anxiety, sorrow, and sin. It is the repose of reliance on an infinite care; trust in an infinite providence always guiding us; confidence in the love of our Father waiting to forgive us whenever we turn to him. This is the reason for coming to church, that, together, in the company of Christian brethren, we may enter into this peace of God. This is what the church ought to do for us all. He who conducts the services should understand that this is the purpose of them; and he should pray to God for power, wisdom, and inspiration of soul, that he may guide all the services to this end. The end of church-going is not to hear arguments and discussions about doctrines, not to listen to an essay or to go through a ceremony, but to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, to be bathed once more by the spirit of God, and so enter into rest.

February 25.

PRAYER in church is well; but how small a portion of our lives does that cover! Prayer-meetings are useful, but they may not satisfy the thirst for God. The real home of prayer is in each separate soul; and its true sphere is in every place, every work, every occupation where we find ourselves. The man of prayer is not the one who goes into a

monastery or a hermit's cell to pray so many hours a day, but he whose spirit and heart are in such communion with God that it is natural for him to look in and up while he is occupied with the stress of work or the contests of competition. This is to "pray without ceasing."

How simple does religion become when reduced to these two essential facts: first, the purpose of seeking for all that is true and good; and, secondly, the reliance on an ever-present help to gain what we seek! This is the life we all can live through faith in the son of God. The child who wishes to control his temper, the school-boy working at his task, the mother in her household and nursery, the man of business in his office,—all can have this strength, and so have the essential and vital element of prayer. Not, indeed, in a moment; for all things come to us by degrees. That which at first is foreign from our habits may at last become habitual, and that which is hard to believe at last self-evident. And, with a habit of inward prayer fully established, we are lifted into a realm of genuine peace, where there are no more impossible duties, no more crushing cares. Such a state we can attain; and what better can we desire for ourselves and others than this?

February 26.

THE essence of prayer is the sense of an ever-present divine love, always waiting to be gracious. When we attain to this feeling, it is not necessary to repeat formulas or to put our needs into words. To desire such help is to pray without ceasing. And with this conviction and desire we grow more certain of the reality of the divine influence. God comes nearer to us inwardly day by day. We find that, when we are weak, then we are strong.

There is no miracle in this, nothing exceptional or unnatural. It is the most natural thing in the world that the spirit of God should enter every soul that is open to him. He fills our empty hearts with a sense of his divine presence and his divine love.

With this view of prayer, as "the soul's sincere desire," it may become a vital element in human progress. If, as Emerson says, "Power and aim are the two halves of human felicity," then conscience, which keeps us to a pure aim, and prayer, which feeds us inwardly with power, will make the highest joy and peace of the soul. Prayer, then, really gives us daily bread. Whenever a difficult duty comes, we look up and receive strength. When we are in doubt, we look up for a moment, and light comes to us. Prayer is essentially for daily work,—for home, shop, school-house, lawyer's office, the legislative assembly, the mechanic's bench.

February 27.

FORTUNATE, thrice fortunate, are those who can believe in this infinite presence of perfect love, around them, above them, and within their very soul. Blessed, thrice blessed, are those who have learned by experience that there is always an answer to every sincere prayer,—an answer which comes, fulfilling some divine law, not necessarily in outward events, but in inward strength, knowledge, and peace. Blessed are those to whom this vast universe is not a dreary desert, but the house of a heavenly Father, in which are many mansions, suitable to all the needs of all his children. Blessed are those who, while they believe in universal, unchanging law, see in this majestic order of Nature an endless adaptation to the wants of all, and whose hearts tend upward to God by a steady outflow of trust, hope, and love. This is the prayer of faith, which is never without an answer.

When one who has all his life prayed only the prayer of form, at last opens his real soul to God, the spirits in heaven may say to each other with joy, "Behold, he prayeth!" When the worldly man, hardened in outward routine, is moved by some deep experience to pray, there may be joy in the presence of the angels of God. When the good man who has tried hard to do his duty, but only in his own strength, feels the need of some higher help, then it may add something even to the joy of heaven. And this prayer may be answered,

as Paul's prayer was answered. The Lord answered Paul's prayer by sending Ananias to him to comfort and teach him. Some blessed human sympathy may be the answer which God sends to our prayer,— some kindly human love, some unexpected word of human counsel. When we are moved, we know not why, to say a word of encouragement or do some good action, perhaps the Lord is making us his mediator to answer the secret prayer of one of our human brethren. Let us, then, not resist such influences, but be willing to be led by the spirit of God, to become his agents for good in the world.

February 28.

"HE WHO ASKS RECEIVES."

"ALLAH, Allah!" cried the sick man,
racked with pain the long night thro',
Till with prayer his heart was tender, till
his lips like honey grew.

But at morning came the Tempter; said,
"Call louder, child of pain!
See if Allah ever hear, or answer, 'Here
am I' again."

Like a stab, the cruel cavil through his
brain and pulses went,
To his heart an icy coldness, to his brain
a darkness, sent.

Then before him stands Elias; says, "My
child, why thus dismayed?
Dost repent thy former fervor? Is thy
soul of prayer afraid?"

"Ah!" he cried: "I've called so often,
never heard the 'Here am I.'
And I thought, God will not pity, will not
turn on me his eye."

Then the grave Elias answered, "God
said, 'Rise, Elias, go,—
Speak to him, the sorely tempted; lift him
from his gulf of woe.

"'Tell him that his very longing is itself an
answering cry,
That his prayer, "Come, gracious Allah,"
is my answer, "Here am I."'"

Every inmost aspiration is God's angel
undefiled;
And in every "O my Father!" slumbers
deep a "Here, my child!"

Translation, through the German of Tholuck, from the Persian.

March.

GOD.

March 1.

WE have a Friend who knows us better than we know ourselves, loves us better than we love ourselves, helps us when we cannot help ourselves, forgives us when we cannot forgive ourselves, and in the midst of our deepest despair breathes into our heart the breath of a new and divine hope.

March 2.

WE cannot know God until we love God. Jesus teaches us to know God by showing him to us as our Father and Friend. It is by coming to him day by day, and trusting in him and leaning on his help, and believing in his providence and conversing with him in aspirations of prayer, that we come at last to be as certain of God's presence and love as of our own existence.

March 3.

"My heart and flesh cry out for the living God!"

THE God whom we need, whom the heart and flesh of man desire, is the living God. Not a mere Law of the Universe, nor a Spirit of Intellectual Beauty, nor a First Cause only, nor the Unknown and Unknowable Substance behind all phenomena, nor the Absolute Being outside of all relations and devoid of qualities, nor the three Subsistences in one Essence. These are the gods of theologians and philosophers. But the human heart has always cried out for the living God, the personal Friend, the God who is a Protector and a Shield, in whom we can trust; in short, our Father, the God and Father of Jesus Christ. Life is love; only when we love, we live; he who loves the most is most alive. The living God is the God who loves. The God who is infinite life must have infinite love. He bends over his universe with a divine tenderness, and not a creature lives anywhere but exists because God loves it.

March 4.

MAN is not himself when away from God. Man needs for growth and development, for the full action of his powers, the sense of the divine presence and the divine love. The man who has no faith in God is only half a man. Half of his nature, and

that the higher half, is passive and dormant. He is away from his true home, a poor wanderer in a foreign land.

In the irreligious man the higher nature is asleep or dead. The conscience is stupefied, the reason sophisticated, faith enslaved to superstitious beliefs. The love of truth is often perverted into the love of error, fault-finding, captious criticism, perpetual denial. When he becomes a religious man, what takes place? He says, "I will arise, and go to my Father." He has come to believe that he has a Father and a Friend to whom he can go, on whom he can rely, in whom he may trust.

March 5.

SCIENCE has enlarged our conception of God by enlarging our conception of the universe. Before science did this, our little world was considered to be in the centre of creation; and it was believed that the sun, moon, and stars revolved around it every twenty-four hours. Our little planet was the most important place which God had created, and the Lord was supposed to have this for his chief care. But astronomy came, and showed us that the earth was one among myriads of planets, the sun only one of many million suns, our world but a speck in the heavens. And so with our knowledge of the universe grew our idea of its Creator and Governor.

March 6.

THERE is no one wholly without God in the world. There is no one who does not have an altar, at least to the "unknown God," in his heart.

Many men erect this altar to God under the name of law. They worship the order of the universe, and they do not know that they are worshipping God. They need to see that this magnificent stability of the universe, this grand web of law which they study and adore, is not dead law, but living law; that it is the perpetual act of God. They need to see that what they call law is God's steady and uniform course of action, and that behind and within all this law is divine love, all things working together for good.

March 7.

I AM persuaded that this increasing sense of the ineffable greatness of God is that which makes prayer now more difficult. But, at this point, Jesus comes to reveal another aspect of the Deity, as a personal friend of every child. He is the Father of the prodigal son, whom he sees while yet a great way off, no less than of the obedient son who is always with him. Through him we have access to the Father. That is the spirit put into our heart, which enables us to say, "Abba, Father!" Thus we, who were afar off, when we saw God only as the Infinite

Source of all things, can come nigh to him, and can commune with him.

March 8.

SCIENCE remains cold, material, dead, so long as it is irreligious, because unspiritualized. If men of science only knew it, they would see that they are ignorantly worshipping God when they worship law. It is not necessary for them to abandon science in order to be religious. Let their science be filled with love, and that is religion. The lecture-room may be made a temple; the most abstract mathematics become a liturgy; the cabinet of geology, mineralogy, botany, a chapel filled with more sacred relics than the bones of dead saints, because they are signs of God's presence, and bear the marks of his creating thought and forming hand. Science does not need to be silent before religion, but only to know the God whom she already ignorantly worships.

March 9.

TO believe in an Infinite Perfection, and to worship it, is the first and greatest of human duties. It is the root and source of all. The sense of a Supreme Good and Beauty, the feeling of an Ineffable Majesty and Holiness, the belief in one Supreme and Perfect Being,—this gives unity, aim, consist-

ency, stability, to our life. Without it, what are we? where are we? Motes in the sunbeam, coming from nothing, going nowhere.

When God asks us to put our trust in him, it is not for his sake he asks it, but for ours. It is because we need this faith for peace, progress, goodness. We need to have faith in a Supreme Being whose name and nature is love, who fills the heavens and earth with his benign presence, and is guiding all the events of time to one great consummation.

March 10.

THE old religions put God above the world as Maker and Ruler. He issued his commands from that supreme throne to the universe, established laws, and gave orders. He made the winds his angels, and lightnings his messengers. He said to his creatures, "Go and do this, go and do that"; and they must not reply, nor ask the why nor the how.

But, when the gospel comes to us, it gives us another view of the Almighty. He is not the mighty monarch now, not the Oriental despot sitting in secluded and awful grandeur. He is the heavenly Father, the ever-present Friend. He is the pervading life, beauty, joy, of the universe. He lives undivided, he operates unspent. He fills the flowers with their beauty in the depths of the eternal forests; he is in the immeasurable smile of the far-rolling ocean; he warms in the sun and refreshes in the breeze; he descends into the

smallest insect to give it its happy day of life; and he cared for the soul of the trilobite in the oldest geological epoch as certainly as he cares for your soul and mine to-day. He is the safety of the universe. Nothing can fail, nothing can go wrong, while he is above all, and beneath all and around all and within all. Myriads of angels and archangels, of powers more majestic than our thought can conceive, serve and obey and love him. But he can also descend in sympathy to the lowest forms of life. He cares for the cherubim and seraphim, and he cares for the animalculæ of the tropic seas.

March 11.

THE highest act of the human intelligence is to know God. It seems almost incredible that the finite mind should be able to conceive of an Infinite Being, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, from whom and through whom and to whom are all things. No wonder that some are perplexed by the grandeur of the thought, and say that they are atheists. The wonder is that this faith in an eternal Supreme Being should be the most deeply rooted of all convictions in the heart of man. Living in this little moment of time, we cannot help believing in worlds without beginning and without end. Standing on this minute point of space, we are obliged to conceive of an infinite universe, without bound or limit. Sure to die in a few brief years, we

are conscious of immortal being. Does not this show that God himself speaks in our heart, and that we know him because he knows us, and reveals himself by a light within the soul?

March 12.

THE reason of man, no less than his heart and flesh, cries out for the living God. Instincts of his thought rooted in his nature bind him to heaven. He sees behind all the movements of the universe an immovable, ever-present cause, over all its adaptations a presiding intelligence, above its great order a sublime unity; and this infinite wisdom, power, unity he names God, Lord, Allah, Ormazd, Brahma, Jehovah, Zeus, Amun, according to his vocabulary. This has brought all men in all lands to believe in a Supreme Being. But, to know God as well as we may, we must take still another step. Knowledge culminates through experience. We can *believe* in God from observation and from reason: we know him best as we habitually commune with him.

March 13.

WHEN any one becomes a child of God, and is in the spirit of obedience, trust, and love, God reveals to him the secrets of his divine grace, shows him all that he himself doeth. His eyes are opened, and he sees

the providence of God in all things. A certain blessed power of inspiration comes to him; he is able to make others alive as he is himself alive; and all who love the Father love these children of the Father, who are full of the Father's spirit.

March 14.

THE worst of hells is doubting the love of God, and we turn away from the face of our Father when we do wrong. But, if hell is always near, heaven is equally near.

March 15.

IF you would know God so certainly that no farther doubt shall be possible, take the path of obedience, trust, and faith. Do his will, and so know of the doctrine. He who lives a generous life enters into communion with God, for God is love. He who in his feebleness prays for strength, in his anguish of soul prays for comfort, in his sinfulness prays for pardon, in his longing for goodness and truth opens his heart to the Infinite Goodness, the inspiration of the heavenly Comforter,—he shall come at last to know God so surely that no doubt can ever trouble him. His faith is no longer a matter of opinion and argument: it is insight and knowledge. He is as sure of the presence of God in his soul and in nature as he is of his own existence, and that of the outward world.

March 16.

WHY cannot we all be followers of God as dear children? Why not live in this spirit, and walk in this spirit day by day? Fathers and mothers, if you wish your children to grow up loving and obedient to you, become yourselves loving and obedient children of God. This spirit is irresistible. We can reply to arguments, we can harden ourselves against the dogmatist; but, when we remember the honorable, upright, generous life of our father and mother, we know that goodness is not an illusion, but something solid and real. Let us live such lives that our children may have faith in the truth.

March 17.

LET us lift up our hearts! Let us open our souls to this present inspiration! Let us believe in the heavenly Father, not the local king, nor the finite judge. This is the voice which says evermore from out of the heavens, "Come to me!" This voice is answered by the innumerable multitudes of living souls which people the boundless universe, "We come to thee!" This voice commands an unlimited trust, invites to an entire repose in the majestic order of which love is the beginning and the end. Our God, the God and Father of Jesus Christ, is the God who says evermore, "Come!" He leaves none of his children orphaned. He sends

none away. His ear is open to all their cries. His mercy endures forever. His love was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

March 18.

WE know God at first unconsciously: we know him, but do not know that we know him. Every one has an inward perception of something higher than himself, some power higher than all he knows, some cause back of all other causes, something mysterious behind all that is plain, something infinite beyond all that is finite. This mystery, infinite, supreme, the eternal ocean surrounding the continent of time, the infinite firmament in which the finite worlds all hang suspended, we do not at first call God. But it is in our soul, behind everything else, below everything else, above everything else. The sense of awe, of wonder, of terror, before the mystery of existence, is perhaps our first sight of God.

Paul told the Athenians that they were ignorantly worshipping the true God. He said he would declare to them the being whom they ignorantly worshipped. The roots of the knowledge of God lie deep in every soul. We have within us a secret sense of the everlasting distinction between right and wrong, good and evil. We have the idea of something perfect behind all imperfection,—an ideal truth and beauty toward which all our aspirations lead us. The most unthinking

man has hours when the mystery of life comes near to him. In those moments he comes into relation with God.

March 19.

THE unconscious knowledge of God is good but it is not enough. We need not only to know God, but to know that we know him. This is life eternal, this fills the soul with spiritual life.

The intellect needs to know God in order to be able to understand the mysteries of the universe, to find behind all creation its primal cause, beneath all changing phenomena their unchanging essence, back of all the surface beauty of things their all-bountiful source.

The conscience needs to know God, that it may perceive an infinite justice below all that seems false and evil, a perfect goodness toward which all wrong tends as its solution, a revelation of righteousness to come. Believing in this, we can be patient and endure the present evil and wrong, sure that all things are working together for ultimate good.

And the heart needs to know God as the All-Beautiful and All-Good, the source of whatever is tender and lovable in this world. Otherwise our most beautiful ideals are only bubbles on the stream of accident. Unless God is in all, earthly love is unsubstantial.

March 20.

AS God has seen fit to make us free beings, he has for that reason withdrawn his presence, and veiled himself behind nature and below consciousness. We are not obliged to believe in God or to see him, unless we will. If we were so obliged to see him, we should never be free to choose between right and wrong. His infinite majesty would mould us to a passive service in his hands. Therefore, he allows the atheist to deny his existence, the worldly man to forget his presence, the sinner to be free to disobey his laws. But all the more do we need to watch this freedom, and not abuse it. He is not far from any one of us; and, if we will open our eyes and lift up our hearts, that soft, sweet, penetrating light will stream in. "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*"

March 21.

WE know God because we are known of him. We can never, by any effort of ours, pass the infinite distance which separates the eternal One from ourselves; but he can pass over that vast abyss, and come to his creatures. Who by searching can find out God? If we sometimes have a glimpse of that divine perfection, if we sometimes can look up out of time to eternity, if we can feel the presence of him, sole fair, sole true, it must be because he has come down

to us. When we feel that heavenly presence in nature, when our heart burns within us at the sight of summer woods, of midnight stars, of the wide-rolling ocean, it is God who reveals himself to us in that mystery and beauty. God comes to us in our conscience, commanding us to love right and to hate wrong, to be faithful and true, generous and unselfish. In that still, small voice he is ever speaking.

March 22.

WE know God because he first knows us. We love God because he first loves us. The gospel of Jesus brings him to every human heart as its loving Father and Friend. I know my own weakness and sin: I know them but too well. But these shall not make me despair, since God, who knows them better than I, has sent Jesus to seek me and to save me. The goodness we could never have found has come to find us. The forgiveness in which we could not have believed has shown itself to us in the infinite patience of Jesus Christ. More than human love the eternal goodness "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." If human love can reach that point where it never fails, still more surely can it be said of the divine love that it never faileth.

Know me, O my Father, as I am; and then shall I know thee aright. Let my soul lie open to thy light and thy truth. Lead thou me on!

When faith was lost, when my poor bark was driving
'Mid aimless doubts on thought's tempestuous sea,
I yet could say, in all my hopeless striving,
"I know thee not; but I am known of thee."

In blacker storms of earthly sin and passion,
One ray of light amid the darkness shone,
That when thou, Lord, this soul of mine didst fashion,
Its depths of weakness all to thee were known.

And when thy peace is in my heart descending,
When the dear Father's face again I see,
The same great thought with every joy is blending,—
"I know thee now; for I am known of thee."

March 23.

BUT is not this the wonder of wonders, the most inexplicable and unspeakable fact, —that the Infinite Being, the Being of beings, the great order of the universe, the profound substance beneath all existence, he who is above the reach of reason, imagination, philosophy, should not be above the reach of love? We see power everywhere, wisdom everywhere, benevolent adaptations everywhere; but before the personal Being, the great heart of the universe, there hangs an impenetrable veil. To the intellect this mystery is unfathomable. But there was one human soul able to draw aside that veil, one who from the first spoke of God as *Father*. The inspired heart of Jesus went to a depth far below that of the philosophic reason. It came near to the heart of God. And so he was a revelation, never before made, of the *Father*. Therefore, he who has seen him has seen the Father.

March 24.

WITHOUT God the world is a great void, a vast emptiness, an infinite disorder. There is nothing permanent to reverence, to love, to worship, to trust,— only blind forces, only dead laws. The stream of human history flows by, tending nowhere. Dark Fate sits, a gloomy sphinx, by the wayside: the desert sands drift over it for centuries, and no answer comes to our questioning heart. To be without God is to be without hope in the world.

But, when we come to know God, we have immortal life abiding in us. Then the soul is alive through and through. Then sunshine returns to our days, strength to our will, activity to our intellect, satisfaction to our heart. Then we have a Father who loves us, and in whom we can trust. As we seek to do his will, and depend on his providence, we know him more and more, until at last he becomes as real to us as that all-surrounding nature which is his manifestation. Every earnest purpose, every trusting prayer, brings us nearer to him. We have the evidence and witness of his being within our soul. As the shadows of night vanish with the coming dawn, so our doubt and unbelief disappear as we live from God for man.

March 25.

THERE is but one fatal heresy: it is that which limits the power, the wisdom, or the love of God.

March 26.

IF these poor hearts of ours cannot forget our children, does the Infinite Heart of the universe cease to remember them? If we do not love them less because of their weakness and incapacity, how much more shall the Father of their spirits look down on them with inexhaustible love! Say not that his infinite tenderness can be exhausted by their sin, when ours, so much poorer, does not grow faint nor weary. If we must forgive our brother, not seven times, but seventy times seven, when shall an Infinite Mercy grow unrelenting and implacable? Our reason and conscience are disturbed by incompleteness and discord in this little world: shall the Perfect Reason permit an everlasting discord, an eternal hell of sin and misery to continue, unconquered by his love, unredeemed by his gospel, forever? Jesus himself has taught us this mode of reasoning, by analogy, from the poor love of earthly parents to the greater tenderness of the heavenly Father.

March 27.

THE "unspeakable gift" which gives value to God's other gifts is the love which is in them. It is "unspeakable"; for who can describe even human love, much less Infinite love? But what we cannot describe we can see and know. Who can describe the melody in the song of a nightingale or the music of a gentle voice? But we know these, and can recall them after long years. So we may know, though we cannot describe, this unspeakable gift of Divine Love.

Men may receive all God's other gifts; and, if no love is seen in them, they will awaken no gratitude. A man may be gratified by the sight of outward beauty. It may please his ideality and imagination, but leave his heart cold. The sight of vast laws may gratify our desire for knowledge. A man may do right simply because it is right, and will find satisfaction in so doing. But the "unspeakable gift" may not be in any of these blessings.

It is not till we see love in God's gifts that we are grateful; and, when we see love, we cannot help being grateful.

March 28.

WHEN God has once given us to know himself, this greatest of all gifts he gives forever. After years of trivial, outward life,—life empty of any solid satisfaction,—

there comes some day of trial, of sorrow, of great and bitter disappointment, some day in which remorse seizes us for our wasted years, or our hardness and indifference toward our friends, or our life empty of any great purpose. Then, in the midst of our sense of utter helplessness, we are led to see that God loves us still, that his arms are around us, that he can forgive to the uttermost all our folly; and in that sight we begin a new life. After this, no matter what comes, we have something we can never lose again,— a faith in God's love which nothing can quench, one anchor which holds fast in every storm. "Now abides faith," says Paul, telling how belief changes and opinions pass away. If we have ever once really trusted the Supreme Goodness, that trust will always remain in the depths of the soul,— a seed of hope and love. When God gave that, he gave it forever. I suppose this is what is meant by the Calvinistic doctrine of "the perseverance of the saints." Not that the saints may not do wrong and go wrong, may not forget their best purpose sometimes, forget God's love sometimes, but there remains that experience in their hearts always, ready to bring them once again to their Father.

March 29.

INFINITE Spirit! who art round us ever,
In whom we float, as motes in summer sky,
May neither life nor death the sweet bond sever
Which joins us to our unseen Friend on high.

Unseen,—yet not unfelt,—if any thought
Has raised our mind from earth, or pure desire,
A generous act, or noble purpose brought,
It is thy breath, O Lord, which fans the fire.

To me the meanest of thy creatures, kneeling,
Conscious of weakness, ignorance, sin, and shame,
Give such a force of holy thought and feeling,
That I may live to glorify thy name;

That I may conquer base desire and passion,
That I may rise o'er selfish thought and will,
O'ercome the world's allurement, threat, and fashion,
Walk humbly, softly, leaning on thee still.

I am unworthy. Yet for their dear sake
I ask, whose roots planted in me are found;
For precious vines are propped by rudest stake,
And heavenly roses fed in darkest ground.

Beneath my leaves, though early fallen and faded,
Young plants are warmed,— they drink my branches' dew:
Let them not, Lord, by me be Upas-shaded;
Make me, for their sake, firm and pure and true.

For their sake, too, the faithful, wise, and bold,
Whose generous love has been my pride and stay,
Those who have found in me some trace of gold,—
For their sake purify my lead and clay.

And let not all the pains and toil be wasted
Spent on my youth by saints now gone to rest;
Nor that deep sorrow my Redeemer tasted,
When on his soul the guilt of man was pressed.

Let all this goodness by my mind be seen,
Let all this mercy on my heart be sealed!
Lord, if thou wilt, thy power can make me clean:
Oh, speak the word,— thy servant shall be healed.

March 30.

IT is this faith in the unseen and eternal which gives substance to the things seen and temporal. We can spare anything else better than our faith in God. To live with-

out God in the world is to live without hope in the world.

Not less, but more, of religion is what we need. To see God only as power may lead to a religion of superstition. To see him only as law may despoil our life of warmth and glow. To see the divine life only in the beauty of nature and art may end in a sentimental religion, lacking moral force. To see God only in the law of duty may result in a hard, technical, and merely moral religion. To see him only in the soul may end in a mystical religion. To see him only in Christ tends to a narrow, intolerant, and formal religion.

And, therefore, we need to go forward, not backward, into a larger sea of thought, love, and life. We need to find God as the fulness, filling all in all. Let us see him in science, in universal law, giving vitality to all our knowledge, and making nature more divinely fair. Let us see him in all the duties of our daily life, glorifying their humblest details with the warmth of devotion and the tenderness of a father's love. Let us see him in the depths of our own soul; in the mysteries of our being, a light shining in the darkness, illuminating our reason with a reason more divine.

March 31.

DRAW near, then, in faith, to this great, overflowing fountain of heavenly compassion. God has put into our hearts his

spirit, to enable us all to say "Our Father!" Let nothing separate us from his love,— neither life nor death, nor our own folly and sin, our own weakness and ignorance, our own doubt or unbelief. Let us not be troubled by harsh doctrines. God asks for none of these things at our hands. Sacrifice and offering he does not require,— not the sacrifice of our own reason before unintelligible mysteries. He says only this: "My son, give me thy heart!" And, to enable us to do so, he shows his own love to every soul that he has made,— shows how he leaves the ninety-and-nine sheep, and goes into the wilderness after the one that is lost; how he so loved the world as to give the only one who had risen to the height of perfect sonship — his only Son — to bring the same sense of a Father's love to the rest of his children. He allowed this dearest child to die in torture and shame, that we, by that solemn sacrifice, might be lifted out of darkness into marvellous light. So now we can behold in all his gifts this unspeakable gift of a fatherly love. Now every outward blessing has in it a touch of divine tenderness. Now we see in the universe not only beauty and wonder, power, order, law, but, interfused with and penetrating all things,— that highest of all,— a divine love. Hold fast to it: let it not go, for it is your life! To trust in the Father's love is the gospel within the gopsel: it is the inmost secret of Christ; it is the way, the truth, and the life.

April.

JESUS CHRIST.

April 1.

WE bless him who can make us see God. We are often away from God; we have lost sight of him; it seems as if he had forgotten us. Who shall show us the way back to our Father? Whoever does this for us is our real priest after the power of a spiritual life.

God is always near to us, always waiting to be gracious. But we do not know it, or do not believe it. Jesus, in his tenderness toward the sinner, so mediates a divine tenderness that we are able to believe in God's love, and can come to him.

April 2.

JESUS is the great High Priest of the human race, because he was so full of the sense of God's presence and love that he has spoken to the heart of man, and lifted it nearer to the Father. So he may say in truth, "No man cometh to the Father but by me."

Before Christ, men went to Jehovah, the God of Justice; to Jupiter, the God of Power; to Brahm, the Abstract Spirit; to Boodh, the representative of the human soul struggling against the laws of nature. They went to Science, and found not God the Father, but God as Infinite Law; they went to Philosophy, and found God as Reason and Cause of all things. But never, never did they find their Father except through Jesus; and so he became, by that revelation, the High Priest of the human race forever.

April 3.

I BELIEVE Jesus to have been Son of God, and divine, because filled full of the divine truth and love, and always abiding therein. He alone, of the sons of men, was always resting on the infinite love. He has sent the same spirit into the world, and enabled all to say, "Our Father." His divinity did not consist in any metaphysical deity of person, but in living in constant communion with God, so as to be a perpetual manifestation of the divine truth and love. He is the unclouded mirror which reflects into the world the glory and beauty of the Almighty. Therefore, we all, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of God, are changed into the same image from glory to greater glory. Christ's divinity consists in being the image of the unseen God,—of God manifest in a man. God is manifest in nature. He is also manifest in providence, in history, in the intuitions of the

soul. But in Jesus God speaks to us through human lips and a human life, and so, by our brother man, brings us to himself.

April 4.

AND so every humble soul that sees the Father, and lives in that sweet vision, becomes a priest to other souls. A sacramental power goes from the voice, the touch, the look, of every one who is himself loving God. I call it a sacramental occasion when any soul, full of the love of God and man, strives to help another soul, to purify, to elevate, to bring it to God. Something beyond the meaning of the words passes from heart to heart. Something more convincing than argument, more weighty than reason, makes of that hour a sacramental hour, and of that office a priesthood. The life of God flows to us through these channels. Deeper than all depth, higher than all height, the Spirit comes through these human hearts to ours.

April 5.

I BELIEVE that Jesus, first of all men, clearly saw and alone among men has fully declared the infinite pardoning love of God to the sinner. He indeed teaches that God, when revealing himself in law, makes a perpetual distinction between right and wrong, good and evil; that every man must reap as he sows; be rewarded and punished

in this world, and in all worlds, according to his deeds; be judged by his works; and, according to his practical fidelity, be ruler over five or ten cities; according to his practical infidelity, go into outer darkness. This eternal law of God Jesus does not destroy, but fulfils, — carries out to its ultimates. But meantime he reveals the other side of divinity, showing the infinite tenderness and compassion of God, which makes no difference among his children, except this: that he cares most for those who need him most, so that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety-and-nine just persons who need no repentance. Christ's death did not produce this love, or make it possible for God to pardon sinners; but it revealed it. It showed that this love, binding the highest to the lowest, is the reconciling power in the universe,— the great atonement by which evil can be fully overcome by good.

April 6.

THIS is the great atonement which is taught everywhere in the doctrine of free grace, by which thousands and tens of thousands of sinners are brought to God. And this was, is, and will be the very centre of Christian revelation,— law made at one with love. And this great doctrine of the overcoming, all-conquering, omnipresent power of divine love to redeem the lowest and lift the most forlorn and save the most abandoned,—

this is nowhere taught as in the New Testament, and there only is fully reconciled with the equal omnipresence of divine law.

April 7.

WE, to-day, dear friends, enter into this region of faith. We also are risen with Christ. We sit in heavenly places with him. For heaven is not a place far off, above the skies, somewhere outside of the orbit of Saturn and Neptune; but it is a world of spiritual life all around us. Christ has abolished death to all who believe in him. Those who believe in him do not die: they go on, they go in, they go up.

While the disciples at Emmaus were talking with their Master, their eyes were opened, and they knew him. While we talk with Jesus on this Easter Sunday, our eyes are opened, and we know him. He is our friend, the friend of every soul that needs him. He is the friend of every poor, sinful, broken heart that thinks it has no friend on earth. He is the friend of all who wish to have his help. The true Christ is not in the past: he is here. He is not dead and gone: behold! he is alive forevermore. He has not come merely to give us a right to be with him in some future heaven. He has brought heaven down to us here. He is with us always, even to the end of the world.

Therefore, on this Easter Sunday morning, while its sun shines so brightly around us, let

us all thank God, and take courage. Let us not look backward, but forward; not downward, but upward; not be desponding, but hopeful. Are there any of us here who feel lonely, bereaved, desolate? Behold! the heavens are opened, and an innumerable company of friends are waiting for you to welcome you when you go up, and lead you to him who liveth and was dead, and is alive forevermore. Are there any of us who are hesitating to do what we know to be right, not ready yet to do our duty, still postponing till to-morrow what we ought to do to-day? Let us on this bright Easter morning begin to do our work in full faith that God will enable us to accomplish it in this or in some other world. O weary heart, arise and be strong! Sad soul, be glad to-day, for Christ has arisen! Sinful soul, turn to God, and forsake your sins, and be made alive! Take part in the better resurrection, which lifts out of evil into good. Make this day the beginning of a new life, which shall never know any end, but shine brighter to the perfect day.

April 8.

THE essential fact of the resurrection, therefore, according to Christ and Paul, is not the rising from the grave or a visible, bodily return to life, but the ascent of the spirit into the spiritual realm. The essential fact in the resurrection of Jesus was this: that he was not dead; that he did not die;

that death had no dominion over him; that he had gone up into a higher world, and yet was able to come to his friends below, to teach them, to influence them, and be with them always to the end of the age. The questions of *how* he rose, with what body he came, in what way he showed himself,—these were all secondary and unessential. It was enough that the disciples saw him, knew him to be alive, knew that he was not defeated, that he was coming as the Messiah to establish his kingdom. This was the all-important conviction which gave new life to their souls.

If we, then, be risen with Christ, let us seek those things that are above. Our sense of immortal life will deepen as we devote ourselves to all things generous, humane, true, and good. This is the true way to keep Easter: to rise out of all that is poor, mean, cowardly, into courage and faith. Let us give ourselves, souls and bodies, to God, and be sure that all things will work for good to those who love him.

April 9.

THAT which makes the difference between Jesus and the other great teachers of mankind is his entire confidence in God as his father and friend. No one else among the masters of human thought has shared it with him. Neither Socrates nor Confucius, neither Buddha nor Plato, neither Zoroaster nor Moses, ever said: "I and my Father are

one"; "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee"; "Thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world"; "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, nor the Father but the Son." It was this perfect union of his heart, mind, will, with the heart, mind, and will of God which has made of Jesus the leader of the human race. Deeper than mortal thought ever sounded, he went down into the depths of the infinite mind. Higher than human aspiration ever soared on wing of poet or prophet, he went up into the living glories of the upper world. This was "the length and breadth and depth and height" of the love of God in the soul of Jesus, which filled him with all the fulness of God.

April 10.

AND of this fulness we have all received. This is the culminating and surpassing wonder. The experience of Jesus has become the experience of his humblest disciple. Through him we all have access by one spirit to the Father. A Christian, ignorant in worldly knowledge, without worldly science, has an unction of the holy spirit, and can know all things in the kingdom of divine truth. Our lives, no less than the life of the apostle, may be hid with Christ in God. We, also, are partakers of the divine nature. What he received, he received that he might impart it to his brethren. The poor woman, lonely

and unfriended, winning her bread by hard toil, opens her Bible after her day's work is over, and she rises into the society of angels and archangels. She is bathed in a light from above; she has before her a seraphic vision. In her poor room she is sitting in heavenly places with the goodly company of the prophets and the noble army of martyrs, made one with God and Christ by an immortal hope.

April 11.

JESUS calls himself "the door" through which the human race can again come near to God. He makes himself a door, an open way to his Father and our Father, a door opening into the deepest depths of the divine love. Nature is a door opening into the universal divine presence pervading the universe. That door can never again be closed. We can never go back to the early limitations and simple prayers of the childhood of the race. Humanity has become a man, and has put away childish things. But we can unite these two great conceptions of God as the All-in-All around us and as dwelling inwardly in every soul.

It would seem from the New Testament that Jesus had no incommunicable powers or qualities. What he had was his to communicate, not to keep. For example:—

Jesus had the power of working miracles. But this power he declares to be one which his disciples shall also possess: "Greater

works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father."

Jesus was one with God. But he says of his disciples, "That they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me."

Jesus had power on earth to forgive sins. But he says to his disciples, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them."

Jesus was a perfect example of human goodness. But he says to his disciples, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Jesus knew all things. But it is said of his disciples, "Ye have an unction from the Holy Ghost, and know all things."

Jesus was sinless. But the apostle says, "He who is born of God cannot commit sin."

Jesus is to be judge of the earth. But Paul says that "the saints shall judge the world and men and angels."

In Jesus dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead. The apostle prays for the Ephesians that they "may be filled with all the fulness of God."

Jesus had glory with the Father before the foundation of the world. But he says "The glory thou gavest me I have given them."

God sent Jesus to be Saviour and Redeemer of the world. But he says to his disciples, "As my Father has sent me, even so send I you."

April 12.

HOW are we to have faith in Christ as the door? Not by bowing down and worshipping the door, but by rising up and going through it. How are we to have faith in him as the true vine but by gathering and taking away the fruit he bears? How do we show our faith in him as the living bread? Surely, by feeding our souls with it day by day. And how do we most sincerely show our belief in him as the Good Shepherd, unless it be by joining his flock and following him?

April 13.

DO not ask, When is Christ coming, and when is he to appear? Christ is here now, if you will open your soul to him. He is not hidden, nor afar off. Whenever you will try to do your duty, trusting in God; whenever you will help and comfort any weary soul; whenever you will forgive those whom you think have injured you, and do good to those who treat you with seeming scorn; when you will put out of your heart envy and low ambition, poor vanity, self-conceit, and give yourself to what is generous, true, and noble,— you will discover that Christ has already come. His hour cometh always, and is now.

April 14.

THIS is the way to know Christ,—to stand still and look at him, not to argue about him. Look at his holiness, so grand, yet so simple and unpretending, which came up in Judea, and lasted a few years, and then filled the centuries with its light and beauty. Look at his religion, so human, yet so divine; a religion for this world, and the other world, too; a religion which loves God by loving man; a religion not of dogma, ceremony, anxious fears, but of trust, obedience, and generous love. Calm, deep, brave, a leader of men; also tender, childlike, pure. Stand still, and look at Jesus himself. Come to his feast of love, and think about him. Sit at his feet, and thank God that he has lived, lifting us above the terror of death and sin, and showing us heaven here and heaven hereafter.

April 15.

COME then to Jesus and find rest, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden! Do not wait until you can decide which, among all the ways, is the very best way. Come by whatever way is the plainest for you. Take the hand of this dear Master, and be led by him. He says to us all, "Follow me!" We can always do that, or, at least, try to do it. We may not be able to follow close by him, in the company of his chosen saints; but we can see him afar off, and still follow him, if only a

great way behind. Nor will he forget us then. He who blessed the poor widow who put her two mites into the treasury will, perhaps, accept our two mites of poor but honest belief; our feeble effort to do good to some of his little ones; our short prayer made in the closet of our heart; our patient submission to the will, though it may seem hard, of the heavenly Father. So wide as this is Christ's invitation. He wishes those who need him to come to him, and those who come to him he will in no wise cast out.

April 16.

LET me call your attention to what seems to have especially impressed the early disciples, which they expressed by the word "fulness." John, in our text, says of Christ, "Of his fulness have we all received." Paul speaks of our "all coming to the stature of a perfect man, unto the measure of the fulness of Christ"; and in another place he says of Jesus "that it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." By this fulness they intend the rounded and entire union in Christ's teaching of that which had been before made separate. What men had put asunder he joined together. He united piety and morality,—love to God and love to man. Jesus, who spent whole nights in prayer, spent long days in doing good. You cannot say whether God or man were nearer to that large heart. In Jesus, mind

and hand were equally in harmony. The profoundest thought went out at once to some practical application. He declared himself to be the Messiah, the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and yet he washed the feet of his disciples, talked on equal terms with publicans, Samaritans, and Romans, and had for his companions and friends humble fishermen and untaught country people.

April 17.

IT has been denied that any one man can be all this, because to be this implies perfection of nature; and all men are imperfect. But those who deny that any man can be perfect seem to be yet hampered by the fatal doctrine of hereditary depravity. Why should not one man be perfect? Is sin so natural to man that perfection is unnatural? Were we made to be sinners, made to be always wrong? Many men have approached a spotless perfection. Why should not one man have attained it? We are, all of us, perfectly good at some moments in our lives, when we submit wholly to truth and love. Why should not one man have been always in this state of entire submission and entire love? Jesus had no such doubt. He did not believe that man was necessarily imperfect. He said to the average men about him, neither better nor worse than we are, "Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

April 18.

CHRIST is divine because his character is divine, because he shows us God. In proportion as we see that divine quality in his soul and life, we really believe in his divinity. We may call him God ever so loudly, but we do not really believe him divine until we understand that his generous love to his fellow-men is a divine quality; that his devotion to truth, justice, freedom, holiness, is divine; that, as God loves, he loved to have us do God's will rather than to say, "Lord! Lord!"

April 19.

JESUS says, "The words I speak to you are spirit and life." Therein is their immortal power. What a difference between living words and dead words, — words which are empty repetitions of an old belief and words filled with a present sight of truth, inspired by a new revelation from heaven, glowing with knowledge fresh from the oracles of God! It is this immediate insight which gives authority to speech. When one whose soul is thus aflame with lofty convictions gives utterance to his thought, then truth itself seems to speak through his lips, and conviction follows his every word. And such words have an immortal youth. So live the words of Homer through the intervening centuries. So the song which came from the pale lips of Dante vibrates in human hearts to-day. And be-

cause the words of Jesus were inspired by still loftier realities, and are the outcome of a more profound insight, he could say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." What a daring prophecy, but how sure to be fulfilled! Oblivion may sweep over all other literature; but mankind, if it has forgotten all else, will still cling to the words of Jesus. When he uttered that wonderful prediction, his sayings were unrecorded. He gave no command to have them put into writing. They probably remained unwritten during the lifetime of that generation. Many doubtless may have been lost, and can never be recovered. But those which remain are full of the spirit of Jesus, and it is this heavenly spirit that is of the chief value to us all. Paul said he did not care to know Christ Jesus after the flesh, since he had the spirit of Christ formed within him, the hope of glory. The Church has been torn with controversy, futile and idle, in regard to the origin of Christ, his essential being, his relation to the substance of God. These questions belong to the letter which killeth. But he who knows the mind of Christ, he who has the spirit of Christ, belongs to him; and to him Christ belongs.

We walk by faith, dear Lord, and not by sight;
We cannot follow where thy footsteps led,
Nor hear that voice of tenderness and might,
The voice that calmed the storm and raised the dead.

Yet *had* we known thee, doubting and weak-hearted,
With thickest veil of worldly thought between,

We might have stood aloof or soon departed,
And not *believed* that which our eyes had seen.

But, if we have not seen, and yet believe,
A better blessing thy dear love imparts,
More than thine outward presence to receive,
To find thy spirit formed within our hearts.

April 20.

I KNOW those whom I love, and I know no one else. Those who love me, and no others, know me. Sharp, cold, criticising intellect knows nothing as it ought to know it.

And so we know Christ by loving him. When we take him as our Master, Friend, Saviour; when we seek to obey his divine law, and help him in his present work in the world,— we come to know him. He who sympathizes with Christ in caring for the poor, the ignorant, the suffering, the sinful, comes to know Christ. In looking for his poor, we find *him;* in visiting his prisoners, we visit *him;* in speaking words of truth and love to the sinful and weak, we find ourselves in secret intimacy and sympathy with our Master. We do not know Christ by only reading about his life and miracles, but by having him formed in our hearts, by letting Christ's spirit act in and through us, and so leading others to him.

April 21.

CANA.

DEAR Friend! whose presence in the house,
Whose gracious word benign,
Could once, at Cana's wedding-feast,
Change water into wine,

Come visit us; and when dull work
Grows weary, line on line,
Revive our souls, and make us see
Life's water glow as wine,

Gay mirth shall deepen into joy,
Earth's hopes shall grow divine,
When Jesus visits us, to turn
Life's water into wine.

The social talk, the evening fire,
The homely household shrine,
Shall glow with angel visits when
The Lord pours out the wine.

For when self-seeking turns to love,
Which knows not mine and thine,
The miracle again is wrought,
And water changed to wine.

April 22.

JESUS was not the result of a past development, but the beginning of a new era of thought. You cannot explain his

teaching from the influences around him. He was not merely in advance of the tendency of his period: he created a new and different order of faith. He was so far removed from the popular opinion of his day that even his disciples did not understand him. To the last they reported what he taught about the kingdom of heaven without comprehending it. Not only were they incapable of inventing this original and majestic character, but they failed to see its meaning when before their eyes. This shows that the teaching of Jesus came from himself alone, and that no one else could have created his gospel. He was a new word of God, coming down from heaven; a new inspiration of the divine truth; a new incarnation of divine love.

April 23.

ONE important way of reading the words of Jesus is to seek first what is plain and unquestionable. Find what it is which he emphasizes, on which he lays the main stress, the teachings which are central and pivotal. In every great teacher some truths are radical: they are the roots from which the rest grow. In reading Plato, you would not begin with the obscure dialogues, but with those in which he teaches his essential doctrines. There are Platonic ideas in Plato around which his doctrine revolves: they are the keys which open the doors of his mind. There are similar fundamental

ideas in Aristotle, Descartes, Bacon; and, these being found, the obscurer parts may be neglected. So in the teaching of Jesus there are great central truths which fill the soul with light. There are leading thoughts which unlock the gospel, and are the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Seek these first, and all else of importance in the thought of Jesus will come afterward. When we have these, we have the mind of Christ. These may be called the gospel in the Gospels.

April 24.

ONE of these radical, central, and all-pervading truths is that of the fatherly love of God to all his human children. To Jesus God never came as Power, as Law, as Intelligence, chiefly; but all these attributes were subordinated to the infinite fatherly tenderness. The fatherhood of God was to him not a doctrine, but a vital experience from the beginning. In the Sermon on the Mount he tells his disciples, fifteen different times, of "their Father in heaven," whom they may glorify by letting their light shine; whose children they become when they love their enemies; their Father who sends blessings on the evil and the good; the Father whose perfection they are to imitate; their Father who sees in secret and rewards openly; their Father who knows what they need before they ask him; their Father who feeds the little birds of the air; their Father in whose

providence they may always trust. So Jesus taught at the beginning of his ministry, in Galilee. At Jerusalem the Jews rebuked him for this language, thinking it irreverent familiarity, and accusing him of comparing himself with God when he called God his Father. But this was a proof of their narrowness; for Jesus laid no exclusive claim to be the Son of God, but taught that all men, even the evil and unthankful, were children of the same heavenly Father. In his agony he said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"; on the cross he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"; and, when he left the earth, he told his disciples, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Thus from the inmost life of Jesus this sense of an ever-present divine love passed steadily into his teaching and influence. This, therefore, must be one of the most certain elements in the "mind of Christ."

April 25.

ANOTHER central idea in the mind of Christ was his profound faith in his mission to the sinful, the miserable, the discouraged, and the down-trodden. He believed his chief work was to these. "I have come to seek and save those that are lost." The Christian Church to-day has not risen to this faith. They believe that Jesus came to *seek* the lost, but do not believe that he came

to *save* them. When the Church speaks of "the lost," it means those permanently lost, — those whom Christ is unable to save. He compared the heavenly Father to the good shepherd who sought the one lost sheep "*till he found it.*" He said it was not the will of the Father that one of his little ones should perish.

April 26.

WE have four central ideas, undoubtedly, present to the mind of Jesus,— his faith in the fatherly love of God, his trust in the all-conquering power of truth, the breadth of his human sympathy, and his mission to the sinful and abandoned. To these we must add yet another,— his faith in the spirit of religion, and his indifference to the letter. The Jewish religion in his day had run into an extreme formalism. Besides the written law of Moses there were unwritten traditions taught by the constitutional lawyers who explained all the details of ceremonial worship. Obedience to the law had run into minute observances. In opposition to this ceremonial religion Jesus placed the essence of goodness in the soul; in justice, mercy, and faith; in love to God and man; in purity of heart and life. He healed on the Sabbath, walked with his disciples on the Sabbath, defended his disciples for eating grains of wheat on the Sabbath, set aside the ceremonial ablutions, ate with publicans and those who were outside of the Jewish communion. Thus, in the

mind of Christ, the essence of all righteousness was not in ceremonies or ritual, but in the heart and soul.

April 27.

IF it be objected to our faith in Jesus that the criticisms of the present time have made his history uncertain, and shaken our confidence in the authenticity of the Gospels, I reply that the truth of the gospel history of Jesus does not rest on critical reasons, nor can it be shaken by critical objections. It rests on the harmony and consent of the accounts of this great person. From these evermore emerges that sublime figure, bearing the lineaments of reality. The human mind has the power of seeing what is true to nature. You might just as well look at the sun and doubt its reality as read the story of Jesus and question its historic truth. All critical objections dissolve in air before the personality which looks out upon us from these simple records through all the intervening centuries. It is the face of one whom we have learned to know better than the brother who sat with us by our father's fireside. Notwithstanding the narrowness of his nation, the ignorance of his biographers, the hardness of the age, the low views of God and man prevailing around him, we hear a voice which speaks with the authority of perfect insight,— a voice which creates a new era, which pours light on time and eternity. It is a voice so strong yet so tender that it sinks

into our soul, needing no other proof of its reality than itself. Some things prove themselves to be true, and need no other evidence. So it is with the character of Jesus.

April 28.

JESUS tells us, as Moses before had said, that we live by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God. Thus he rebukes all narrowness and bigotry which would make him the only word of God. He wishes us to hear God's voice in nature, in history, in friendship, in love, in life and death. We live a true life, we grow and become strong to do and bear, as we find something of God in all these,— something divine. Yet most of all is Jesus himself the Word of God. That wonderful life, so simple and natural, yet so deep and high; Son of God in its lofty communion with Deity, Son of Man in its tender sympathy with humanity; that life so brave that it went straight to every work as it came, met all sorts of men without doubt or hesitation, yet so modest that it went by the lowliest ways and the simplest paths.

That life continues to be the bread of heaven and the food of the world. By it we live in faith and hope. We believe in God as near and helpful, though we do not see him. By that life we know God as our Father and man as our brother. By the life of Jesus this world seems rich and good and the next world better. As we feed on that life, we find

it to be the best word of God, and we are nourished by it and made strong. Man eats angels' food. This is the bread which came down from heaven.

April 29.

AND might we not expect, from the nature of God, that he would give us such a revelation of his truth and love as we find in Jesus Christ? "What man is there among you, being a father, who, when his son asks for bread, will he give him a stone?" For thousands of years men's hearts have been feeling after God, asking him for this living bread. They have been looking for God in the magnificence of the rising sun; in the solemnity of the starry night; in the inscrutable beauty of air, fire, water; in the solitudes of the forests and the mysterious and inaccessible mountains. Will not the Father come to these children who are seeking for him in all these ways? He comes, by the voices of sages, prophets, wise and good teachers, in all lands and times. But at last a Teacher arrives, who speaks as never man spake, and before whose voice all other voices are hushed and still. He takes humanity by the hand, and leads it to an infinite Father, to a holy law of eternal right, to a hope full of immortality. And shall we not say that he came, not by the will of the flesh or the will of man, but by the will of the loving Father of us all? This has given a unity to all modern civilization, has made life

everywhere new, has created a new heaven and a new earth. Jesus is to-day the leader of the human race. Is it reasonable or not to believe that God meant him so to be?

April 30.

O THOU by God ordained to lead the race
In mighty march and grand procession on;
King, Prophet, Saviour,— show thy human face,
And let us know thee as ourselves are known.

Come, Prophet! teach the world. Thy solid truth
Alone this doubt can cure, can light this gloom,
Make real that unseen world's undying youth
Which turns to dreams the terrors of the tomb.

Come, King, and reign o'er those who yearn to prove
Life's task full matched with their strong souls' desire;
Who long for work deserving human love,
Not to live idly, not unwept expire.

Come, Saviour! in our sin and need and pain,
Treading the path where thy dear feet have gone,
Help us through thy full life to live again,
And be through thy deep peace with God at one.

May.

MAN.

May 1.

GOD has placed us here to grow, just as he placed the trees and flowers. The trees and the flowers grow unconsciously, and by no effort of their own. Man, too, grows unconsciously, and is educated by circumstances. But he can also control those circumstances, and direct the course of his life. He can educate himself. He can, by effort and thought, acquire knowledge, become accomplished, refine and purify his nature, develop his powers, strengthen his character. And, because he *can* do this, he ought to do it.

May 2.

YET we must add that this is not all. There is something more. "Grow *up*." "Grow up in all things"; but also "grow up in all things into him who is our Head, even Christ." This is what Goethe, with all his wisdom, failed to see. This is what makes

the apostolic maxim wiser than his. To grow up is an end, but not the final end. Grow up, in order to grow up into Christ. That is, since Christ is another name for generous love, cultivate and unfold all powers in order to do good, for the sake of helping, saving, inspiring, guiding, animating, encouraging other souls. Develop all your powers; but for universal usefulness.

May 3.

THE wonderful works, knowledge, character of Jesus are not unnatural, but natural: they are not exceptional, but prophetic. What he was all men may become. He is the type of humanity, the example of its fully unfolded condition. Jesus came to help others to become what he was. So far from regarding him as exceptional, the Gospels and Epistles teach that everything Jesus was we are to be. Those who commune with him by faith shall gradually be changed into the same image, and grow up into the stature of Jesus Christ.

May 4.

IF God finishes everything in nature, if he makes the rhodora beautiful in the wood where no human eye can see it, and paints in exquisite tints the shell at the bottom of the ocean, we may trust that he will not rest till he has made all our souls and all our lives

pure, generous, noble, beautiful. We are as yet only the roots of a future beautiful plant. The best man or woman is only a shoot a little way out of the ground. We are God's plants, God's flowers. Be sure that he will help us to unfold into something serenely fair, nobly perfect, if not in this life, then in another. If he teaches us not to be satisfied till we have finished our work, he will not be satisfied till he has finished his.

If we can believe this of God, then we can love him as we love our father, as we love our friend, in whose answering love we have perfect confidence. Such a confidence in God as this is alone the source of genuine piety. Not till we cease thinking of him as justice, as power, not till we are able to trust in him as one who means to save us perfectly, and unfold us into all the strength and beauty for which he has designed us, can we love him with all our heart, or love our brother man like ourselves.

May 5.

JESUS came to show that religion was made for man, not man for religion; that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; that the Bible was made for man, not man for the Bible; that the church was made for man, not man for the church. He taught that man is greater than the temple, greater than all forms and ceremonies, and that the development and education of the human soul is the object of true religion.

May 6.

ALL souls belong to God and to goodness by creation. God has evidently created every soul for goodness. He has carefully endowed it with indestructible faculties looking that way. Every soul has an indestructible idea of right and wrong, producing the feeling of obligation on the one hand, of penitence or remorse on the other. Every soul has the tendency to worship, to look up to some spiritual power higher than itself. Every soul is endowed with the gift of freedom, made capable of choosing between life and death, good and evil. Every soul is endowed with reason, with a capacity for knowledge; and especially is every soul endowed with the faculty of improvement, of progress.

May 7.

ONE chamber of the mind is fitted for thought, another for affection, another for earnest work, another for imagination, and the whole to be the temple of God. It stands now vacant, its rooms unswept, unfurnished, wakened by no happy echoes; but shall it be so always? Will God allow this soul, which belongs to him, so carefully provided with infinite faculties, to go wholly to waste? The man who buried his Lord's talent was rebuked. Will God destroy his own work? Having made the soul for himself, will he let it continue undeveloped by not putting it to

use and educating it in the course of his providence?

No: God, having made the soul for goodness, is also educating it for goodness. The soul which belongs to God by creation will also belong to him by education.

May 8.

THE earth is God's school, where men are sent to be educated for the world beyond. All souls are sent to this school: all enjoy its opportunities. The principal teachers in this school are three,— nature, events, and labor. Nature receives the new-born child, shows him her picture-book, and teaches him his alphabet with simple sights and sounds. She has a wonderful apparatus, and teaches everything and illustrates everything by experiments. She lets him handle wood, water, stones, shows him animals and birds, insects and fishes, and thus familiarizes his mind with a fixed order, with permanent law, with cause and effect, substance and form, space and time. Happy are the children who can go to Mother Nature and learn in her dame school! The little prince was wise who threw aside his fine playthings, and wished to go out and play in the beautiful mud.

May 9.

THE next teacher in God's school is labor. Work gives health of body and health of mind, and is the great means of developing character. Nature is the teacher of the intellect, but labor forms the character. Nature makes us acquainted with facts and laws; but labor teaches tenacity of purpose, perseverance in action, decision, resolution, and self-respect. The man who has done a day's work well respects himself, has contentment in his heart, and knows himself, however humble his sphere, to be in that sphere essential. It is bad that men should be overburdened or broken by toil, bad that children whom God has sent to his school of nature should be sent too early into the school of work; but the necessity of daily labor is a gift to the race the value of which we can scarcely estimate.

May 10.

THEN comes the third teacher,— those events of life which come to all; joy and sorrow, success and disappointment, happy love, bereavement, poverty, sickness and recovery, youth, manhood, and old age. Through this series of events all are taken by the great teacher,— Life. These diversify the most monotonous career with a wonderful interest. They are sent to deepen the nature, to educate the sensibilities. Thus nature teaches the intellect, labor strengthens the

will, and the experiences of life teach the heart.

For all souls God has provided this costly education. What shall we infer from it? If we see a man providing an elaborate education for his child, hardening his body by exercise and exposure, strengthening his mind by severe study, what do we infer from this? We naturally infer that he intends him for a grand career. If he knew that his son had a mortal disease which would take him away before maturity, would he subject him to this severe discipline? Then, when God disciplines us by severe toil and sharp sorrow, we may believe that he is forming us for a great career by and by.

May 11.

AGAIN, all souls belong to God by redemption. The work of Christ is for all: he died for all, the just and the unjust, that he might bring them to God. He came to reconcile all things unto God. Christ did not die for the great and the distinguished only, nor for the good and pure only, but for the most humble, neglected, and forlorn. The light streaming from his cross reveals in every soul a priceless treasure, dear to God, which he will not willingly lose. The value of a single soul in the eyes of God has been illustrated by the coming of Jesus as in no other way. The recognition of this value is a feature peculiar to Christianity. To be the means of converting a single soul, to put a

single soul in the right way, has been considered a sufficient reward for the labors of the most devoted genius and the ripest culture. To rescue those who have sunk the lowest in sin and shame has been the especial work of the Christian philanthropist. To preach the loftiest truths of the gospel to the most debased and savage tribes in the far Pacific has been the chosen work of the Christian missionary. In this they have caught the spirit of the gospel. God said, "I will send my Son." He chose the loftiest being for the lowliest work, and thus taught us how he values the redemption of that soul which is the heritage of all.

May 12.

AFTER long centuries of evil and ignorance, God sent into the world a man who seemed to have escaped all taint of sin, and to have a power which took hold of men's souls with a strange authority, In him were joined light and love, so that he, by this union, inspired life. Dead souls came to life at his word, dead hearts began once more to beat, dead hands to do good work. Those who were in their graves, and contented to be in their graves, heard his voice, and came forth. He called himself Son of Man; that is, simply, the Man. The world for the first time had a man in it,—full-grown, full-balanced in head and heart. Sometimes, also, he called himself Son of God; for to

him God was not a judge or a king, but a father. His soul passed into the life of his disciples, and through them into the life of the age. It leavened the whole lump of human nature. In a few centuries the grand Roman Empire laid aside its own ancient religion, deposed its pontiffs, abolished its flamens, silenced its augurs, and received this crucified Jew as its Master. This man had left nothing in writing, but his fugitive sayings became the oracles of mankind. He had formed no system of belief, but all the venerable philosophies became the servants in his school. He came from the obscurest corner of an obscure state, to be the light of the world. He taught a year, and died, and is the life of mankind.

May 13.

ONE of the leading features in the mind of Christ was the breadth of his human sympathy. He was educated in the midst of Jewish prejudices. He was in a society to which the Romans were odious. But he was friendly to the Roman centurion, healing his servant, and saying, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, and Jesus made a Samaritan the hero of one of his most charming stories. To him there was neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, but only human beings. He went outside the limitations of his time, the con-

ventions of his people, the traditions around him, the public opinion in which he was born, and took his stand on the brotherhood of man. In this he was so much in advance of his age that, until Paul came, none of his own disciples wholly grasped this broad element or were emancipated from Jewish provincialism. But this was an essential part of the mind of Christ.

May 14.

JESUS comes nearer than any other to that which is deepest and best in us. How true the saying, "He knew what was in man, and needed not that any one should testify of him!" His words are spirit and life. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount we read that the people were astonished at his teaching; "for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Jesus states the divine law, and it carries conviction with it. He tells the story of the Pharisee and publican, and we see the difference between the prayer of formality, self-conceit, self-righteousness, and that of a contrite and broken heart. He tells the story of the Good Samaritan, and we see before our eyes the nature of generosity — simple, direct, thorough-going. This picture of goodness hangs on the walls of time ever fresh and fair. He tells the story of the Prodigal Son, and God, who was afar off, comes nigh to us as a forgiving father. The gospel spoken by Jesus brings heaven near to earth, takes the burden

from tired humanity, gives new courage to anxious hearts and timid consciences. And Jesus, belonging to another race, another age, and a far-off land, is better known to us than any other teacher because he understands better than any other our human needs. We know him, because we are known by him.

May 15.

"WHEN he came to himself." This passage assumes that the true self in man is not bad, but good. Man goes away from himself whenever he does wrong. Hidden in the words we use are whole volumes of history and philosophy. When our words and phrases do not come from theories, but from the long observation of the race, they often contain the results of that experience in compact form. Thus "to come to one's self" means to recover mental and moral sanity.

Let us understand, then, that our true self, our real self, is our best self. In our best hours we are most truly ourselves. We are then what God made and meant us to be. We are at one with ourselves. All our faculties work harmoniously according to the true method. The soul commands: the body obeys. The conscience obeys the law of right: the appetites and desires are obedient to that conscience. There is no such thing, therefore, as natural depravity. All depravity is unnatural.

May 16.

IF we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. If we say we are totally depraved, we also deceive ourselves. God has put into us a great deal that is good. He has given us reason, conscience, heart, freedom to choose good, power to resist evil. When he has done all this for us, to say that he has made us totally depraved, is not humility, but ingratitude and impiety.

May 17.

THE sense of right and wrong, the delicacy of conscience, the feeling of moral obligation which is in us, we did not make ourselves. God gives it to us: he gives it anew all the time. It is his Holy Spirit dwelling in us, warning, advising, restraining, impelling us. It is in every human soul. This holy monitor, this sacred, solemn voice, is from grace, from love. It is the Father's arm held round every child, to keep him safe from evil.

May 18.

THAT man's true self is his best self appears also from the fact that the worst men still esteem goodness. The most worldly person looks with reverence on those who devote themselves to helping mankind, to the heroes of philanthropy, to the great teachers

of truth. Let a man deny himself, and take up his cross, let him give his life to noble objects, and universal esteem accompanies him: he is honored and beloved by his fellow-men; and, when he dies, the great heart of humanity is melted in sorrow at his loss. Men recognize in him their own best nature, they see in him their own highest life, and thus testify that man is himself only as he is noble and good.

To be a religious man is not to be less manly, but more so. It is not to cut off any faculty, to deny any power, but to unfold all in the light of God's truth and God's love.

May 19.

MAN has faculties by which he perceives God, duty, and immortality. But these faculties must be exercised, or they lose their power. The more we exercise the spiritual faculty, the more certain do spiritual things become. He who habitually obeys conscience sees more and more clearly the eternal distinction between right and wrong. To him who constantly looks forward with trust to a future life, immortality becomes more and more certain. The pure in heart who habitually look up to a heavenly ideal of goodness see God more and more. He who trusts in Providence comes to stand so firmly on that rock that no doubt can disturb, no disappointment shake his confidence that all things are working together for ultimate good. If a

man does not use his spiritual powers, he gradually loses them.

May 20.

DENY conscience, deny generosity, deny purity of heart, and you quench the eye in man's soul by which he sees God.

May 21.

BUT when we believe in good men and women, in holy men and women, in true men and women, then we are beginning to believe in God. For these are mediators of what is most divine in Deity; that is, of goodness. Nature mediates power, providence, wisdom, universal beauty; but good men mediate that fatherly love, that righteousness, that beauty of holiness, which is to us the essential thing in our conception of Deity. There is only one soul-destroying infidelity: it is to doubt the reality of goodness.

May 22.

SO we may find our true priests everywhere, and we may ourselves be true priests of God. If we have in us the spirit of Christ, if we see God as our Father and as the Father of all men; if, in this spirit, we learn to respect and honor all God's children; if we carry in our hearts, wherever we go, an unfail-

ing trust that God is all around us in nature, that God is always going before us by his providence, and that he is always ready to come into our hearts by the holy influence of his spirit,—we shall find a priesthood in all nature, in all events, in all life, and we shall carry that holy and sanctifying influence to others.

May 23.

IF parents may be priests to their children, so also may children be priests to their parents, opening to them the gateway of heaven. These tender, innocent, dependent, trusting hearts draw out all that is best in ours, and make us more simple, true, and pure. Little children in a family are God's priesthood there, after the order of Melchizedek, to sweeten life with something from on high. "Trailing clouds of glory do they come, from God, who is their home." And when they vanish from our sight, when their forms are laid below the green grass, we sit by their graves under the clear October sky, and hear the dry leaves dropping on the sod, and our hearts are lifted above their common hardness and coldness, and we feel that there is something in us better than the love of money or fame or power; that we, too, belong to their heaven, and shall see our angels again in the presence of God and the great high priest of love, Jesus Christ.

May 24.

MANKIND is aroused from its torpor, is made desirous of progress, as it recognizes its immortal nature and destiny. When Jesus said to his disciples, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"; when he went among publicans and sinners, and made it a proof of his divine mission that "the poor had the gospel preached to them"; when Peter declared "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean,"—then was recognized the worth of man as man, which has grown up into the faith that all men are equal before God, and have a right to every opportunity for progress and improvement. Take away this faith in the inherent worth of man; substitute for it the notion which is growing popular among some scientists, that to try to raise the weak, the down-trodden, and the outcasts is a mistake, that you ought to make the strong stronger, and let the inferior class die out — and you lose one of the mightiest motives for universal progress.

May 25.

THE doctrine of Christianity is not that we are to *call* all men our brothers, but to treat them all as such. No good is done by saying that a man is our brother, if he has no brotherly feeling to us nor we to him. But Jesus taught that outside of every boundary,

outside of every race, party, creed, there was this possibility of brotherhood. It is our business to believe in that root, and to develop that fruit. It does not fulfil our duty to say, "Brother! brother!" any more than to say, "Lord! Lord!" There may be just as much cant in one as in the other.

May 26.

"ALL souls are mine." Blessed declaration of the God-inspired Ezekiel! All souls,— of the great and the humble, the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the king and the slave, the pure child and the abandoned woman, the soul of the apostle John and the soul of Judas Iscariot,— all belong to God. He will take care of what is his: he will leave no child orphaned. Those who are trodden down and forsaken in this world, — he watches their sorrowful lives, and will cause them to bring forth fruit at last. Thus does God love all souls with a universal, unwearied, unfailing affection. Thus did Christ love all souls, gathering around him the publicans, Pharisees, and sinners, the pious and the profane. And thus, if we are Christians, we shall love all souls, calling no man common or unclean, believing in the brotherhood of the race, finding something good in every one,— a vital seed of nobleness in the most deadened bosom; and, in thus loving other souls, our own souls will be blessed. While we forget ourselves, God will

remember us. While we seek to save others, we, too, shall be safe.

May 27.

WE may throw ourselves away; but God will not throw us away. We belong to him still; and he "gathereth up the fragments which remain, that nothing be lost." In order to become pure, we may need sharp suffering; and then God will not hesitate to inflict it. In the other life, as in this, he will chasten us, not for his pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. It is thus that God's love for the soul, and its worth, appear eminently, in that he will not let us destroy ourselves. When we pass into the other world, those who are ready, and have on the wedding-garment, will go in to the supper. They will find themselves in a state of being where the faculties of the body are exalted and spiritualized, and the powers of the soul are heightened; where a higher truth, a nobler beauty, a larger love, feed the immortal faculties with a divine nourishment; where our imperfect knowledge will be swallowed up in larger insight; and communion with great souls, in an atmosphere of love, shall quicken us for endless progress. Then faith, hope, and love will abide,— faith leading to sight, hope urging to progress, and love enabling us to work with Christ for the redemption of the race.

May 28.

LET us rejoice, friends, in these great hopes. Let us praise God for his creating, educating, and saving love. Let us rejoice that the lost souls — lost to earth, lost to virtue, lost to human uses here — are not lost to God; that he still holds them in his hand. Let us rejoice that those who will not be led to him by blessings and joy shall be led to him by anguish, pain, and suffering. Let us rejoice that the glory of heaven and the fires of hell shall both serve God, — both work together for good.

May 29.

JESUS came to gather up the fragments of human virtue, love, and goodness, that nothing should be lost. There are always some fragments of good in every heart. God's great law of economy applies to these. If he does not allow a comet to wander hopelessly away into emptiness, but sends the great archangel, gravitation, to bring it back, he will not let a soul, made in his own image, go off on any fatal erratic curve into outer darkness. The great archangel Love shall pursue the lost souls, and find them. That is what Christianity teaches. The Son of Man comes to seek and save the lost. If he had pity on the fragments of bread, will he not pity the fragments of broken minds and broken hearts? He does. He does not

choose to drink the cup of joy alone in the kingdom of God. He cannot be happy there unless you and I are there with him. He cannot be happy there unless we bring with us our lost brethren and sisters who are perishing around us for lack of a little love. Has God sent Christ to seek and save the lost? And shall he not find them and save them?

May 30.

OF all the holy things which God has made, the most holy is man himself. He is the temple of God, for the spirit of God dwells in him; and, wherever a human being stands, there stands something greater than the temple at Jerusalem. God has made man in his own image, with power of insight, capacity for love, energy of action. The mysterious depths and heights of his nature we do not yet half understand. His experience in this world has meanings and objects of which as yet we have hardly an idea. His destiny in the other world, the height of being which he shall climb, eternity alone can reveal.

May 31.

DO not forget that far more sacred than any consecrated bread is that true bread which came down from heaven; that sacred, divine gift in the soul which God has placed in man; that power of aspiration, capacity for

progress, sense of right, knowledge of infinite truth, fitness for boundless love, thought, and action. Do not let even the crumbs of this fall to the ground, if you can save them; for, of all holy things on earth, nothing is so holy in the sight of God as the soul of man.

June.

FAITH.

June 1.

AND now the gospel says to us that all this is only the preparation for a deeper and fuller life of love which God means to give to us on the condition of faith. That is, trust him. Do not doubt his nearness, his influence, his good will. Believe that what he has begun he means to carry on and finish. Trust in your Father, and each day accept as from him the gift of life, the inflowing light of conscience and of reason, the inflowing love which draws out your heart to those around you, the inflowing aspiration which longs for some better and higher goodness. It is always ready to come into your soul. Only open your heart to receive this new life each day in faith.

June 2.

GOD educates man in different ways. Outwardly, by external circumstances,— nature, events, work, study, joy, and sorrow. He

also educates him by inward influence,— by new sights of truth, new experiences of heavenly and earthly love, by airs from heaven, divine impulses which touch the soul and vitalize it anew.

All the great religions of the world teach that there is a spiritual influence coming from God into the soul to awaken and inspire. The Christian doctrine of a Holy Spirit differs from these in teaching of a Holy Spirit which is not for a few prophets, but for all men; not coming occasionally, but dwelling with us always; not a miracle, but natural, and meant as a practical influence to produce inward and outward goodness.

Jesus, when going away, wished his disciples not to look backward, thinking of him, but to go on and work in his spirit for others. So he promised them the Holy Spirit in his place. He describes the Holy Spirit as: —

1. The consolation, the comforter.
2. A permanent influence: "He shall abide with you forever."
3. A teacher, "The Spirit of Truth"; universal, meant for all.
4. It was to be himself. He was virtually to return: "I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you."
5. It was to be an evidence of Christianity: "He shall testify of me."
6. It was to produce inward conviction: "He shall convict [or convince] the world."
7. It was to glorify Christ and Christianity: "He shall glorify me."

Jesus brings to us the true comforter, which is the Holy Spirit. He teaches us to look up, not down; to find our consolation in work for others, thought for others, love for others. He teaches us that God, duty, immortality, heaven, are realities. The Holy Spirit is the influence which descends from God himself into the soul, to help us to see the reality of divine truths. This is the substance of the Holy Spirit. All else is accidental and secondary. The tongues of flame on the day of Pentecost, the wind, the miracles,— these are all the outward part, the temporary form which soon passed away.

The Holy Spirit gives us this comfort by giving us a great faith in goodness as something real, a great expectation for ourselves and others, and love born of this faith and hope. These three are the gifts of God, fed by his spirit in our heart. They are given to us as rain and sunshine are given to the flowers and the grass. But we differ from the grass and flowers in this, that they have no power of resisting the influence from above, while we have. We can "resist the Spirit" or "grieve the Spirit"; or we can live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, and be full of it all the time.

June 3.

WE live between two worlds, the world of things seen and temporal and the world of things unseen and eternal, the world of which we take hold through the senses and

that which we apprehend by faith. We walk by sight, and we walk by faith. Every one, every day, lives by both these faculties.

Faith is a deep fountain in the soul, below reason, below knowledge, far below sensible experience; and without the exercise of faith we could not live. We believe in the reality of an outward world; we believe the sun, moon, and stars are not appearances, but realities, that trees and flowers, rocks, and earth, men and women, are actual existences. An instinctive, universal, and necessary faith is given to every human being.

From faith to faith! From this faith in the reality of an outward world we grow up into other forms of faith, deeper, larger, more intense. How large a part of our life comes from within, not from without!

June 4.

THE next step which we take by faith is our confidence that these realities about us are upheld by unchanging law. We believe that the laws of nature are permanent. What reason have we for thinking that, when we wake in the morning, we shall find things around us as we left them the night before; that we shall meet our family as usual around the breakfast-table; our place of business where it was; the work of life going on just as it did yesterday; human nature always the same? What reason have we for trusting that our food will nourish, and not poison us; that our clothing will keep us warm? "Be-

cause it has always been so," you say. Yes: that is one reason. Experience turns faith into knowledge. But how small is our experience! How little that "always" is, compared with the immensities of duration! Behind and below this short experience of the stability of things lies an instinctive faith that God is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever; that his laws work steadily and surely, without haste or rest; that there is no caprice, no accident, no irregularity in the universe. This second step of faith is the foundation on which all science rests,—that all forces are governed by unchanging and eternal law; that there cannot be any violation of natural law. The miracles of Jesus need not be regarded as violations of law, but rather as manifestations of other laws deeper and higher than those with which we are now familiar. All progress in science and the arts consists in new revelations or applications of law. There was nothing preternatural or unnatural in the wonderful works of Jesus. One day, perhaps, when the race has advanced far enough, and we have "perfect men in Christ Jesus," his prediction may be fulfilled,—"Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father."

June 5.

WE walk by faith in our affections. We have confidence in father and mother, brothers and sisters and friends. We are

rooted in this surrounding love. It is the home of the heart. What a blessing that children grow up in this atmosphere of belief; that they take for granted that their parents and friends are wise and good; lean on these affections, and are safe; look back to them in after life, and have their souls still fed out of the sacred soil of such memories!

From faith to faith! Next comes our faith in human nature. There is an instinct of confidence in man, without which there could be no society, no union, no common work. Men are often deceived; but they still take for granted that, in the main, men will do right, tell the truth, and stand by their engagements. The whole business world rests on this confidence. One of the worst evils of defalcations, embezzlements, false pretences, is that these tend to weaken the confidence of man in man. They give color to the false philosophy which assumes that men are selfish, that every one has his price, that the world is given over to the evil one. On the other hand, every act of self-sacrificing honesty, of loyalty to principle, each uncompromising adherence to justice and truth, strengthens man's confidence in man. And, unless we believe in goodness, unless we have confidence that men, though weak and liable to fall, do not love evil, how can any one try to make the world better? What a faith Jesus must have had in the moral capability of man when he said, "Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"!

June 6.

IF you wish to do good to your brother, you must have confidence in him. This is the first and most essential step toward helping him. Take for granted that men are mean and false, and you make them so. Take for granted that they wish to do right, and you lead them up the right way. They take courage from your confidence, and begin to believe in themselves.

From faith to faith! Confidence in man leads us to trust in God. He who has not faith in his brother whom he has seen, how can he have faith in God whom he has not seen? We say that God is good, and so we trust him. But what do we mean by goodness except the goodness we have seen here? Infinite goodness is, to our conception, human justice, human generosity, human pity, carried upward to their perfection. If we have no faith in man, how can we have faith in God? Every noble act of devotion to truth, every pure life unstained with evil, every word of pity, every instance of forgiving goodness, helps us to a better faith in that divine and eternal goodness which has no variableness or shadow of turning.

June 7.

FROM faith to faith! From faith in man we rise to faith in God. This is trust, absolute trust, that the universe is based on

goodness and love; that all things work together for good; that good is stronger than evil, and must overcome it; that God loves all his children; and that sin and woe, the misery and wickedness of this world, are to end in peace and joy. This was the great faith of Jesus. It was a faith for all mankind on whom the sun shone and the rain fell. Before the mind of Jesus there stood no everlasting hell as a black contrast and counterpoise to an infinite heaven. He believed that he could draw all men unto him, and so to God. He would have the good news of a divine salvation preached to every creature. All who labored and were heavy laden could find rest in this great faith and hope. He has put the spirit into our hearts by which we say Father; and, when we trust in God as a father, we have the germ of all religious faith.

Yet we all need sometimes to say, "Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief." We believe a little, but we need to believe more. How shall we increase our faith?

Every act of faith in God increases our faith in him. To him who hath shall be given. He who waits on the Lord will renew his strength. We do not increase our faith by argument, but by exercise. As life advances, our faith ought to deepen and strengthen.

June 8.

AND so, too, of our faith in immortality. Men say, "We may see some reasons for believing in it, but we cannot know it." Suppose some one should say to your little boy: "Your father is very kind to you while you are with him, but he does not care whether you live or die. If you should fall into the sea from a boat, he would not put out his hand to save your life." The boy would answer: "I know better. I know that he would." The child would know it: it would be no mere probability. And shall we say of God: Yes! He is our Father while we are here. He is an ever-present friend, in whom we live and move and breathe. He has formed us with these wonderful powers by which we can know him and love him. He has educated us by the long experience of life, by the glory of nature, by the far-reaching lessons of history, by the teaching of the wise and good, by the love of all the dear and true; and then he will let us drop into nothing after these few years of earthly experience. He will let us fall back into the abyss of annihilation, while we are yet advancing in thought, aspiration, hope, our real life hardly begun, our reason but half developed, our best powers in their infantile stage of development! And will you tell me that I do not know the contrary, but only conjecture it? If I really know God as my Father, I know that he will not let me go, he will keep his child safe.

"I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

"And so, beside the silent sea,
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from him can come to me
On ocean or on shore."

June 9.

FROM faith to faith! In the same way our faith in prayer grows till it becomes like that of Jesus, unwavering and sure. We often think, before experience has taught us better, that prayer is only contemplation, meditation; that the only answer to prayer is the reaction of our own thoughts,—that it is not communion, but self-communion. We say that God will not change his laws in answer to prayer; and, having said that, we think the question settled. Yes: he does not change his laws; but may it not be one of his laws that those who ask him sincerely and earnestly for inward peace, light, strength, pardon, comfort, shall receive it? Far down in the mysterious depths of the soul, below any distinct consciousness, is the region where we are in communion with God. We hear no sound,—there is no tempest, no earthquake, no fire,—but a voice so low and sweet and still that we only know the peace that comes, the strength that is given, the comfort of the Holy Spirit shed abroad in our hearts; and we say, "I *was* weak: I *am* strong."

June 10.

MANY persons find it hard to believe in any special providence. They say: "God governs the world by laws, and he never interferes with their workings. When we obey the natural laws, we are rewarded: when we disobey them, we are punished. How can I believe that God will alter the working of his laws to meet the needs, the dangers, the exigencies, of any individual?" No: we need not believe this; and yet we may have faith in a Father who watches over his children. Often what seem to be the greatest of calamities turn out to be blessings. It seemed a dreadful thing for the Pilgrim Fathers to be driven by oppression from their pleasant homes in old England to come to these wild shores, with a mysterious wilderness on one side, full of alarms, and a stormy sea on the other. But now we see the great opportunity which was given them to lay deep the foundations of a nation. Thus faith grows, just as knowledge grows. We climb from faith to faith by a manifold experience, and from the childish faith to that manly faith which is still childlike. We pass beyond the sandy deserts of doubt, the morass of scepticism; we rise to higher altitudes, and to a broader expanse of vision. We breathe the air of the upper skies; we are surrounded by a broad expanse of heaven. We are encircled and embraced by a divine love. Thus we go from faith to faith!

June 11.

THERE are those who doubt the goodness or the providence of God because life seems so full of hardship and evil; because there is so much suffering in the world; because evil seems so often to triumph over good; because noble and beautiful souls, the joy and blessing of the world, are taken prematurely away, and those who do not seem to be needed live on. "How can we believe in providence," they say, "when such evils exist in the world?" I have no solution for these difficulties. But, for my own part, I am sure that God reigns. In the instincts of my soul, in the aspirations of my best hours, in the testimony of the noblest of the race, I find a revelation of the divine love. I trust to that, and I wait.

June 12.

THE great work of Jesus in the world is to create such a faith as this. It is to bring us to God, to give us rest, to help us to say, "My Father!" This has been the true work of Christianity, its essential power. The power of Christianity has been something behind and below all its creeds, churches, ritual, ceremonies. In the Roman Catholic and Protestant it is the same faith,—faith in a loving, fatherly, ever-present Friend. It is the same in the Presbyterian kirk and the Quaker meeting. It goes far below questions of criticism, history, doctrine. What

matter questions of trinity or atonement compared with this deepest of all questions,— the relation of the human heart to its infinite Friend? I wish it were in my power to make you feel, as I feel it, how utterly insignificant are all the points which men discuss so loudly compared with this.

June 13.

IN every age and every land it has been the universal and profound conviction of Christians that Jesus has been made to them the open way to God; that through him, somehow, they find forgiveness; through him, hope; through him, a new life in their heart and soul.

This is the key to the ardent language of Paul. This is why he forever repeats the name of Christ. This is why he says, We are rooted and grounded in love. To Paul there came from Jesus this divine revelation of a great Fatherhood, and it broke the bonds of his Pharisaic literalism, of his routine religion; took him out of his ritual, ceremonies, texts of Scripture, into a new life of perfect trust and hope and joy. "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "The life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God." "I live, but not I: Christ lives in me." Christ to him was the manifestation of a divine tenderness of which he had never before dreamed. So that, no matter what happened to him, he was sitting in heavenly places with Jesus; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.

And this unspeakable gift was not given to Jesus alone or to Paul alone, but it is given to you and to me. To us the word of this salvation is also sent. Salvation! for what can be more safe than to feel ourselves in the embrace of an infinite love. Salvation! for we know that our sins will be destroyed and our evil cleansed by coming into this heavenly atmosphere of love. Salvation! for how can we continue to sin if we are kept in the presence of our Father?

June 14.

THE only faith which saves us is that which enables us to save others. And this faith is to believe that God is always ready to give us the power to do anything which ought to be done. If there is a woe, a wrong, a sin to be removed, then God has given us the power with which to do it. If we can believe this, we shall never be afraid. This is a very simple test of genuine faith in Christ. If you have faith enough in Jesus as the Christ of God to enable you to undertake his work of saving your fellow-men from sin and misery here and hereafter, you may be sure you have the true faith. But, if you have not the courage to do this work, then, though you preach faith in Christ as the omnipotent God, and utter that doctrine with the tongue of men and angels, yet you prove by your own cowardice in the presence of evil that you have no real faith in him as an actual Saviour of actual men and women.

June 15.

DO you know of any case of vice or sorrow which it seems almost impossible to relieve or cure? Go and see if God will not work a miracle through your mind and heart, giving your actions and words a power not their own, so that you can make the blind see, the lame walk, and raise up the dead. You must go in faith, however, trusting entirely that, if the thing ought to be done, God will give you strength to do it. You must go also in the spirit of prayer,— not, necessarily, with the prayer of words, but with that essential prayer which consists in keeping one's self in a condition of faith and hope, leaning on God.

June 16.

SALVATION, to be of any use to us, must be a present salvation. It is not enough that I passed through some experience, and repented and was converted and born again last year. I must repent to-day, I must be converted to-day, I must be born again to-day. Nor can I hope to be saved in the future except as I am saved now. Immortality must begin here. God is here, Christ is here, his Holy Spirit is here, all good angels are here, all truth is here; and I can be saved now by trusting in God as my Father and my Friend!

June 17.

FAITH is the spring of all hope, all action, all joy in life,— faith in things unseen; faith in an infinite wisdom and love, before all things, above all things; faith in a God of infinite intelligence, who never makes a mistake; of infinite power, whose plans can never miscarry; of infinite love, which does not mean that any should perish, but that all shall be saved. This faith is to the world of the soul what the sun is to the world of nature.

The Roman Catholic goes to church, and, as he looks at the altar, believing that the Deity is really present there, he is brought near to God. The altar is a way to God; and so he thinks it the only way, and says, "Out of the Church there is no salvation."

Another man, tormented by his sins, is told that Christ has made an atonement, and now he can come at once to God. He finds peace and pardon and joy in believing. Then he says, "There is no way to God but by believing in the atonement."

But every way which brings us to God is the right way; and no way is right for us, unless it brings us to God.

June 18.

FAITH is not a blind belief in doctrines. It is not belief in doctrines at all. To believe the Apostles' Creed, to accept the

Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, to give an intellectual assent to the doctrines of Rome, of Calvin, of Channing, is not *faith* at all. A doctrine cannot be the object of faith: for faith stands upon a higher plane. We believe a creed, but we have faith in a friend. We assent to a proposition, but we trust our father and mother. Faith always has goodness, wisdom, and strength for its object.

It is faith which saves the soul. Belief never did, never can, save the soul. No speculative belief, whether orthodox or rational, necessarily makes a man better. Theological creeds influence conduct, but only indirectly; but faith influences us at once and always.

June 19.

FAITH casts out *fear*, just as love does. When we are afraid of God, we have no faith in him. When we have faith in him, we are not afraid of him.

A great evil of sin is that it casts out faith. It makes us doubt others and ourselves. We are afraid to trust others because we have been deceived. We are afraid to trust our own good impulses for fear they should not endure. We are afraid to trust God because we think we are not fit to go to him, not fit to pray to him. So sin kills out the faith of the human heart, and takes away its life, courage, and hope.

June 20.

ALL human action, all good endeavor, all the progress of civilization, is the work of faith. In the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews the writer says that "by faith" Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the great heroes of Israel accomplished their noble deeds. So it has been ever since. By faith the apostle Paul crossed the Ægean Sea, and went from Asia to Europe to convert a new world to Christ. By faith the missionaries of the gospel went among the savage Goths and Vandals with the same divine purpose, and saved Roman civilization from ruin. By faith, in later days, the Jesuits went among the North American Indians, and Livingstone among the African barbarians, not counting their lives dear, so that they might finish their course with joy. By faith Coster invented the printing-press. By faith Watt discovered the steam-engine, Stephenson the locomotive, Daguerre the sun portraits. By faith Howard reformed the prisons, Wesley gave spiritual life to the lowest classes in England, Clarkson and Wilberforce abolished the slave-trade, Garrison and Abraham Lincoln put an end to slavery in the United States. By faith Dr. Howe penetrated into the darkness of Laura Bridgman's mind, and carried knowledge there. By faith Channing, Bushnell, and Theodore Parker shook the pillars of irrational belief. By faith Robertson and Stanley gave a larger life to the Church of England.

June 21.

THE truth is that faith is the very life of the intellect, the essential condition of all knowledge. All that we know rests on the solid foundation of trust. Trust in certain immutable convictions, confidence in the fidelity of our own faculties, reliance on the veracity of our fellow-creatures, a profound faith in the stable order of the universe and the reign of universal law,— all this is faith, not knowledge; but without it knowledge were impossible. We must begin by trusting our own faculties. We trust our senses. When we open our eyes and see the sun, the earth, the ocean, the faces of men and women, we believe that they are realities. This is an act of faith. When we hear the melodies of winds and woods and waters, the tones of affection, the words which bring to us comfort and peace, we rely on the reality of all this. Our senses may deceive us, yet we trust in them. We trust in our higher faculties. We believe the reports which consciousness gives to us of our own identity and personality, of the reality of right and wrong, good and evil, time and space, beauty, order, immortal truth. Thus faith is the foundation on which our knowledge rests,— faith in things unseen, behind and below whatever is seen.

June 22.

THUS we see that faith abides,—faith in truths as yet unseen, in laws not yet known to us, in great realities outside of our present vision. All human knowledge, human endeavor, earthly progress, depend on faith that beyond what we know there is a great world of truth and good still to be discovered.

And this is, in reality, faith in God. For God is the eternal Truth, the omniscient Good. He is behind all things, before all things, and above all things. We do not see him, but faith leads directly and inevitably to him.

Thus faith is like the primitive granite of our New England. Dig down deep, and you come to it, below all superimposed strata. Go to the summit of the highest mountains and you find it, on the loftiest elevations. Faith begins as the basis of the infant's knowledge: it ends in leading us to know God, Christ, and immortality.

June 23.

IF a sacrament is an outward act or event by which an inward grace is communicated to the soul, there are innumerable sacraments; for God, by a vast multitude of outward, visible influences, is ever manifesting his truth and his love to our hearts and lives.

Thank God for the many sacramental hours of life, the hours when he comes near to us in the outward events of our life, when they not only signify, but also convey to us something from above. Such an hour came to Jacob, when having left his home and the worship of his household, and sleeping on a lonely mountain summit, not knowing that God was still with him there, he dreamed the wonderful dream of a great staircase reaching from earth to heaven, and said, when he awoke: "Lo! God is here, though I knew it not. This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven!" That hour was a sacramental hour, and that rude mountain summit became a means of access to God.

June 24.

THERE are hours in life in which nature is transfigured, when we seem to see the soul in nature. In moments of depression the heart is cold and dead, and the outward world seems cold and dead also. But the soul which is filled with faith and hope and love fills all outward objects with the same joy. So Saint Francis went out to pray in company with the birds. So Socrates, sitting under the plane-tree near the Ilissus, says, "I seem, O Phædrus, to be borne away by a divine impression coming from this lovely place; for the place where we sit seems also divine."

Nature grows alive with the life of the soul.

George Fox, the Quaker, says that, when he was first converted to faith in the Divine Love, and went out into the fields, the whole world around him glowed with new life. The skies were full of a Divine Presence. The air breathed a Divine Love. The birds in their songs seemed to say, "Let us praise God." The same spirit in the Hebrew Psalms calls on the hills to clap their hands, and the waters above and below to be thankful. So is nature transfigured by the soul, and grows full of life. We see God in nature, and our heart drinks peace from sky and land. An ineffable beauty seems spread over the scene; and we wist not what to say, for language cannot utter it. There are days which are like a concert or oratorio, when earth, air, trees, sunshine, blue sky, grass, are all in the same happy mood, all in tune together, no discord to jar the full harmony. In such days the earth becomes a Bible,—the rocky strata its Book of Genesis, the singing of the birds its Book of Psalms, the air full of sunlight and fragrance its Gospels, and the changing lights, the advancing hours, its Book of Revelation, showing to us how God is all in all.

June 25.

SORROW also is transfigured by the soul. What pang so sharp, what anguish so terrible, that has not been borne by martyrs with content and a face radiant with smiles? Faith in God pours beauty and joy into all

earthly sorrows, and thus transfigures them, and makes them a part of the kingdom of heaven.

There are other hours in which work is transfigured,— in which it does not appear drudgery, but a mission; in which it is noble to do anything for God and man; in which every duty is attractive. All work then becomes a divine calling; and we see that men are not only called to be apostles, but also called to be carpenters, called to be merchants, soldiers, sailors, called to be artists, inventors, and that one can sweep a room for the sake of God, and be happy and Christian in doing it. And until our work is thus transfigured, and we see religion in it, it must be often a burden and drudgery.

June 26.

THE sight of great truths and devotion to great causes transfigure, also, our friendship and our love. Friendship is only a habit of being together; love is only a fire of straw, flaring and falling away in a moment, unless its soul is some generous aim, some noble inspiration. But with these, when we talk with our friends, they are transfigured; and we are talking with Moses and Elias, with prophets and saints. Their garments are white as the light; their faces shine as the sun. For, as Jesus is the mirror in which we see the face of God, so are all good men and women, in their better mo-

ments, the illustration to our hearts of the great prophets and saints of the earth. They are our prophets and saints, our heroes and martyrs. What would life be without them? They encourage our faith in all things good and fair, and open to us beforehand the portals of a higher world.

June 27.

AND so, sometimes, Christ becomes transfigured to us, as he once was to Peter and John. Sometimes we see him and understand him far better than at other times. Our hearts burn within us as he talks with us. He opens to us the Scriptures. Technicalities fall away. We do not ask any theological questions about Jesus, whether he was Son of God or of man, natural or supernatural. But we seem to see our Master and Friend as Stephen saw him, a dear human face, a look of compassionate tenderness to us, a pity for our temptations and sins, a divine heart, full of God, yet a human heart, all manhood, too. And the Scriptures grow clear in such moments, grow intensely interesting. Whereas they were before dull, now every word is filled with fresh life. The Bible becomes transfigured: it is like earth in this springtime, every part swelling into leaves and blossoms, every part instinct with life. We study the words of the Bible, always expecting to find something new in them.

June 28.

SO, also, is death transfigured to us, as we live in the light of God's truth and love. The old death is abolished. There is no such thing as death, only change, only progress, since Christ came. The other world grows fair and near, grows sweet and tender. It repels no more: it attracts us. We enjoy this life, are glad to stay and work: we are ready for the other, being sure that also will bring us enough to know, enough to love, enough to do.

Such are the hours of transfiguration which God sends us from time to time to ennoble our lives. We sometimes call them the coming of his Holy Spirit. These moments of inward illumination are the master-lights of all our being. They go with us always, hid in our heart. They are undying convictions, from which we can never escape, teaching us that truth, right, goodness, are realities, and shall never pass away.

June 29.

THESE hours of transfigured life are so precious that we wish to detain them. But this is not the law of our existence. When Peter said, "It is good to be here," he said the truth; but, when he added, "Let us build three tents, and stay here," he wist not what he said. Monasticism tried to build such tents, in these high places of life, and to live on the mount of transfiguration, but

failed. Sentimental and emotional piety try to live in the upper air of high-wrought enthusiasm, in the solitude of devotion, always alone with the only God. But that fails also. It is not meant that we should always live on this mountain, in this high, lonely solitude of worship. We must come down, as Jesus did, to mingle with the world, and do our work in the world.

Let us thank God for these hours on the mount of transfiguration. They make our common life better and nobler. We go on our common way illuminated by these heavenly visions. They preserve us from doubt and despair. They are the seed of a better future for us all,— the small kernels, the little acorns, into which God has put the vast harvests and noble forests of the coming years.

June 30.

PROTECTING SHADOWS.

I SIT beneath the elm's protecting shadow,
Whose graceful form
Shelters from sunshine warm;
While far around me, in the heated meadow,
The busy insects swarm.
Better than any roof these softly swaying leaves,
Opening and closing to the passing air,
Which from afar the fragrant breath receives
Of forest odors rare.
And, as the branches sway,

Revealing depths on depths of heavenly blue,
The tempered rays of sunshine, glancing through
In flickering spots of light, around me play;
While little birds dart through the mazy web,
With happy chirp and song,
Fearing no wrong,
To their half-hidden nests above my head.
Thus, without motion, without speech or sound,
I rest,— a part of all this life around.

Beneath the shadow of the Great Protection
The soul sits, hushed and calm.
Bathed in the peace of that divine affection,
No fever-heats of life or dull dejection
Can work the spirit harm.
Diviner heavens above
Look down on it in love.
And, as the varying winds move where they will,
In whispers soft, through trackless fields of air,
So comes the Spirit's breath, serene and still,
Its tender messages of love to bear
From men of every race and speech and zone,
Making the whole world one,
Till every sword shall to a sickle bend,
And the long, weary strifes of earth shall end.

Be happy, then, my heart,
That thou in all hast part,—
In all these outward gifts of time and sense,

In all the spirit's nobler influence,
In sun and snow and storm,
In the vast life which flows through sea and sky,
Through every changing form
Whose beauty soon must die;
In the things seen, which ever pass away;
In things unseen, which shall forever stay;
In the Eternal Love
That lifts the soul above
All earthly passion, grief, remorse, and care
Which lower life must bear.
Be happy now and ever,
Since from the Love Divine no power the soul shall sever.
For not our feeble nor our stormy past,
Nor shadows from the future backward cast;
Not all the gulfs of evil far below,
Nor mountain peaks of good which soar on high
Into the unstained sky,
Nor any power the universe can know;
Not the vast laws to whose control is given
The blades of grass just springing from the sod,
And stars within the unsounded depths of heaven,—
Can touch the spirit hid with Christ in God.
For nought that he has made, below, above,
Can part us from his love.

July.

HOPE.

July 1.

AND the child of faith is hope, equally immortal. Why do we believe in progress? Why do we try to make the world better? Why do men expect to improve their condition? It is because God has placed within the human heart this boundless expectation of something better to-morrow than we have to-day. The best evidence that there will be progress in this world and in the world to come is this, that hope is an abiding element in human nature. On this instinct rests, in a large degree, our belief in immortality, and a reunion with the loved and the lost in some better world beyond. And it is no delusion, no mere imagination, born of empty wishes. It rests on an immutable, unchangeable law of human nature planted in the soul by the Creator. It is more convincing than any argument, more reasonable than the most subtle logic. It says: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

July 2.

THE deep foundation on which hope rests is faith in goodness,—faith that God is goodness, and that, therefore, goodness is stronger than evil, and must at last conquer all evil. We see evil around us, and we find evil in ourselves; but, if we have faith in God, we are sure that the divine goodness will conquer it. With this unshaken trust planted in the soul, we can believe that all things are working together for ultimate happiness. We see life advancing around us, the world growing better, and all things alive with the spirit of progress. We see one evil after another put down. So we have faith that other evils are also to disappear. With this trust in the depth of the heart, what will not man patiently endure? He can bear infirmity, want, bereavement, loneliness, so long as he can say with the apostle that he is persuaded "that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any created thing, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

July 3.

WE must, however, see that Jesus does not teach any pure optimism in the sense of ignoring evil. Evil was to him something so real and terrible that it were better to cut off the right hand and pluck out the right

eye than yield to it. In this life evil is to be opposed constantly, untiringly, and with all our force. But, to do this, we must work in faith, not doubt; in hope, not fear. To have courage to oppose evil, we must have hope to conquer it. We are soldiers; and we must fight on the side of truth, justice, goodness, against falsehood and wrong. But soldiers who have lost their courage are demoralized, and are already defeated. Jesus saw all the evil; saw the power of temptation; saw that, when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak; saw his approaching death, the disciples' desertion, the traitor's betrayal. But below it all he saw the foundation of rock, the great principle that God reigns, and that, therefore, truth and good must triumph. And this filled the depths of his soul with that central joy which causes the four Gospels to be full of sunshine.

July 4.

MEN in whom the ideas of the State are incarnate, renew once more its decaying life. Good men save the State, but they can only save it when other men are capable of being moved and led by their examples. Hannibal could not save Carthage; Marcus Antoninus could not save the Roman Empire; Demosthenes could not save Greece; and Jesus Christ himself could not save Jerusalem from destruction. Nations can go too far to be saved.

The great hope of this land is in the fact

that the mass of the people mean right, and, unless misled by demagogues, will do right. But, for this hope to be realized, all Christians and patriots must work together. Then we shall have in place of a nation hampered and fettered by evil institutions a great and noble Christian republic, with its face lifted to the future, and the rising sun of coming centuries of human progress glowing around its brow as an immortal halo of glory.

July 5.

HOW does mother Nature teach? She takes on herself the most difficult part of all the course, and she does her work thoroughly. Hers is the real primary school. She says, "I will take the little child who knows nothing, and I will teach him to know the use of his own body, the nature of the world about him, and the articulate language of his country." And she does it. The little child learns to see, hear, touch, taste, walk; to jump, run, climb, hold objects, know what is hard and soft, heavy and light, round and square; to know wood, stone, earth, water, air; to distinguish between things near and distant, sounds remote and close by. Finally, she teaches him to speak a language, he having no other language to learn it by. . . . It is one of the most marvellous things,—if it were not so common we should see this,—a little child learning to speak. The difficulties he surmounts are far greater

than we should encounter in learning Chinese or Sanskrit. And, observe, he does not acquire a smattering of language; but he learns it thoroughly, so as to be able to use it for all practical purposes. Now, how does the dear mother do all this? What is her method? First, she mixes nine parts of pleasure and one of pain, nine of hope and one of fear, in her system. We do just about the opposite in ours. We imagine the child is not studying if it is having a good time. In nature's school it is only studying *when* it is happy: it works when it is at play.

July 6.

A JOYFUL youth is the best preparation for an earnest manhood. A youth of suffering and privation prepares for discouragement and depression afterwards. . . . The memory of a sunny, free, happy childhood goes with us all our way. The memory of the good old grandparents who used to pet us and spoil us; the memory of the ardent friendships of childhood; of the beauty and bounty of nature; the innocent pleasure furnished by earth and water, by bird and insect and flower and fruit,—all these leave their fragrance with us during life, and keep up our faith that love and happiness are the rule, sorrow and selfishness the exception.

Happy child! the roof of whose schoolroom is the blue heaven, with its drifting

clouds and mellow tints of sunrise and glories of evening; whose bench is the soft grass, the gray stone, the limb of the apple-tree; whose books are all illustrated with moving, living forms,—waving trees, dewy leaves, wildflowers, all varieties of birds and insects and fishes and animals. How fast he learns; finding "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything!"

July 7.

THERE is no more important work in this world, no greater duty, than to help others to keep up their courage. I consider it the chief duty of the Christian pulpit to encourage those whom life discourages. I think every Sunday should inspire us with new heart for work, every sermon and act of worship renew our energy and put fresh enthusiasm into our souls for the great battle of existence. He is our best friend whose words of cheerful confidence give more life to our heart; and he is our enemy who, by his words of doubt and his spirit of fear, saps this ardor, and takes from us our courage.

The great danger is of being discouraged by dwelling exclusively or mainly on the dark side of the world; for this ends in despondency, apathy, and moral indifference.

To work without hope is discouraging. We need the sense of progress to cheer and sustain us. To go round and round in a tread-

mill of mere drudgery takes our spirit out of us. Therefore, we need a deeper and larger hope. We need to have faith in mental, moral, and spiritual progress, in the growth of the soul, in the unfolding of its higher powers, its larger faculties. We need to have faith that the years, as they come and go, may give us a deeper experience, may lift us to a larger vision, may enable us to come nearer to God in faith, nearer to man in human sympathy and love.

When we have this sense of spiritual progress, we can bear outward disappointments more easily, sure that pain and sorrow will work for our highest good.

July 8.

THERE is an organ of hope in the brain which perpetually looks forward. It is the instinct of the future. It teaches us that there is not less life for us after death, but more; not less of power, knowledge, love, work, beauty, joy, but more. This belief in the future life does not rest on knowledge or argument, but on the habit of looking forward in faith and trust. Some have more of it, some less. It may be strengthened by exercise. We may look at the dark side or the bright side of things, as we choose. We may look down or up, we may look at our sorrows and trials or at our joys. By looking at the dark side, we lose the power of seeing good. We see only what is selfish, cold, and hard in

men, only what is dark and terrible in the universe. Seek, and you shall find. You have what you look after. As a man sows, so shall he reap. A man may think that he believes in a future life because of the arguments in its favor: he may think that he disbelieves it because he has been convinced by the arguments against it. No: he believes in it because he has established the habit of looking at the good side of things, because he has exercised and educated his organs of faith and hope. He disbelieves it because he has not exercised and educated them.

July 9.

PERHAPS it may be said, It is well for those who are naturally hopeful; but what for us who are not so? How can we, who naturally look on the dark side of things, who are easily discouraged, learn to be more hopeful?

The organic faculty of hope differs in different men. But the higher kind of hope, the religious hope, born of conviction, all men may have. All true religion is hopeful, because the difference between religion and superstition is, that to the religious man God is goodness, to the superstitious man God is terror. True religion is that which trusts in the goodness of God, which believes good stronger than evil, truth more powerful than error, right sure to conquer wrong. It is a kingdom of heaven coming to take the place

of hell on the earth. It is, indeed, faith, not sight. But this faith comes to us in all our best hours. When we are in our highest mood, we believe in the goodness of God, in the commanding authority of duty, in the immortality of the soul. When we are true, brave, strong, generous, pure, we believe in God. When we are cowardly, mean, selfish, then we believe in the devil.

If, then, we wish to cultivate and strengthen our hope, it must be by increasing our faith in goodness and a God of love. We must have faith in the true God, and that is essentially faith in goodness. Faith in God grows as we live in it and from it. As we believe in justice, truth, honor, and act from that belief, our faith in God and goodness continually becomes stronger.

July 10.

THIS, then, is one distinction between the true hope and the false one. The hope which deceives is that which promises us future good with no co-operation of ours. We think to have the end without using the means. We trust in luck, in fortune, in genius, not in thought and work. What we wish and vaguely expect is to find some pot of gold in the ground, to draw the prize in the lottery, to be helped by some powerful friend. Those in whom this fictitious and illusive hopefulness is strong love to read fairy stories and imagine themselves the heroes; are tempted to gamble at cards or in stocks;

prefer speculation to legitimate business; wish to be rich at once. All they undertake, they undertake blindly, trusting in their good fortune, refusing to look at the conditions of success or the difficulties in their way. So their life is apt to be one long failure.

The true hope, on the contrary, is one which is willing to think, wait, and act. It is in no hurry, does not expect instant success. This is what the Scripture means by the "patience of hope." True hope is very patient. It relies on the working of immutable laws, which are sure to bring success at last. The man who has this principle in him does not read fairy tales, but the biographies of those who have done great things. He sees how many difficulties they encountered, how many disappointments they met, how often they were baffled. He sees how they had the "patience of hope"; how they tried again and again and again; how they learned something by every failure; and how, at last, when success came, they had fairly conquered it by honest, careful, thoughtful, persevering work.

July 11.

FAITH in God gives faith in the divine laws as the regular method by which truth and goodness are to prevail. As the world acquires more faith in the supremacy and universality of law, it also comes to believe more in progress. Our trust in the order of the universe gives the hope of great

advances and improvements in the material and moral order. No matter what difficulties intervene, we trust that order will emerge out of confusion, and prevail more and more.

Faith in God as goodness inspires faith in ourselves, and, therefore, hope that we are made for something, meant for something, and that by perseverance we can accomplish something. Thus faith in God is the root and the strength of all sure hope.

Jesus was full of this divine hope. In the midst of loneliness, opposition, and apparent failure, he looked forward to the hour when he should draw all men unto him; when he should judge the earth by his truth; come in his kingdom, and be recognized as the light of the world and the king of truth. His was no illusive hope, fed by his wishes alone. He saw all the evil, the wars, the persecutions, which should precede his triumph. But he had no doubt of the result.

July 12.

THE path of progress for each individual soul lies along this highway of hope. This is the way of salvation. Until we attain this divine hope in the supremacy and ultimate triumph of good in the universe, we are lost souls, dead souls,—dead while we seem to live. Without hope there is no spring of vital power in the human heart which carries life forward. A man having no faith in providence, in the love of God, in human prog-

ress, in immortality, may be, indeed, a conscientious, honest, and good man. But his goodness is without enthusiasm, with no magnetic power, with no force to create life in other souls. But with hope at the centre of the soul all things become alive. As these summer days have roused all nature to a green and growing vitality, so, when hope enters the soul, it makes all things new. It insures the progress which it predicts. Rooted in faith, growing up into love,— these make the three immortal graces of the gospel whose concurrent voices shed joy and peace over all of our human life.

July 13.

LET us have faith, then, that we can overcome evil with good. We can overcome the evil in ourselves by the good which is also there. Whatever may be our fault, our besetting sin, God has given us some power by which to overcome it. Believe in yourself as a child of God, as one whom God has made for himself, and whom he means to help out of all that is bad into whatsoever things are pure and noble and good. Have the same faith for others. Find those who are discouraged, and give them confidence. Help them to hope for themselves. Be not overcome of evil. Evil overcomes us when it discourages us, kills our faith in God, in man, and in ourselves. It overcomes us when it teaches us to despise others and to hope little for ourselves; when it destroys our ideals,

and teaches us to scorn the dreams and hopes of youth. But in every hour of faith and hope and love we are overcoming evil with good.

July 14.

LET us believe in the great laws by which good is born evermore out of evil, and life out of death. Let us trust and hope, and look forward, and work on. O broken hearts, weighed down with unutterable grief, look up, and see that the Lord reigns; that a wisdom, so mighty as to be inexplicable to us now, is sweeping on to the vast issues of eternity. We are too happy in being permitted to live; to be spectators of this great panorama; to be actors with God on this divine stage of being. Be thankful for each day. Be patient with what seems the delay in the progress of truth, the advance in Christianity, the triumph of justice, the development of the human race.

July 15.

JESUS comes to us all to say: "Do not be discouraged. Never be discouraged." Though evil may abound, and the love of many grow cold, though we see no way out of surrounding difficulties, though even our brethren discourage our heart by their gloomy forebodings, and abandon the good cause, leaving us alone, still, let us never be discouraged.

Do not be discouraged in doing good. It may often seem as if you accomplished very little; as if, with all your efforts, you cannot effectually help those whom you wish to serve. When you lift them up, they fall again. You may even sometimes find that your very help seems to do them harm. They relax their own efforts, and lean on you. Then comes the danger of thinking that all effort is useless, that to endeavor to aid the inefficient is always to discourage the laborious, and that the stern laws of retribution should be left to work out their own remedy.

But I believe we ought not merely to help ourselves, but to help each other. We may often make mistakes. We may sometimes do harm. But the greatest mistake of all would be to stand aloof from human sorrow. It was no mistake when Jesus came to seek and save those who were lost, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to bring comfort to the forlorn. It was no mistake when he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Best of all blessings is that human love, that generous sympathy, which puts itself in the place of the sufferer, and gives him the comfort of knowing that he is not alone in the world, not forgotten by his fellow-men. The good of this is never lost.

July 16.

LET us not be discouraged by the amount of suffering and sin which we see around us. Always remember that these evils come to the surface, while the good is hidden. If the vast majority of men did not tell the truth, keep their promises, hold fast to honesty, society would dissolve and become a heap of sand. Be not discouraged, then, because you see and hear so much of what is evil in the world, but be sure that the good is much more wide-spread and more powerful.

Courage comes to us when we remember that evil is transient and good permanent, that error is fleeting and that truth is eternal, that God is on the side of all things just, honest, pure, and noble. Then we can say with the poet: —

"That more and more a Providence
Of Love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good.

"That care and trial seem at last,
In memory's sunset air,
Like mountain ranges overpast,
In purple distance fair.

"That all the jarring notes of life
Are blended in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounded into calm.

"And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west winds play;
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day."

July 17.

SUPPOSE we have no sense of spiritual progress; that we do not seem to be growing wiser or better as the years pass by; that we often find ourselves, in some respects, worse than we were; that our conscience is not as sensitive, our purpose to do right not as fixed, our aim not as high.

When we find nothing in ourselves on which to lean, Christ teaches us to lean more entirely on the pardoning grace of God and God's spiritual help.

Jesus does not come as a physician to those who are whole, but to those who are sick. He comes to the poor in spirit, to the spiritually poor, to those who find little in themselves in which to trust. He speaks to these of the infinite fatherly love, of the perfect providence, of Him whose will it is that not one of his little ones should perish. He comes to say to him who is discouraged, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee"; to bind up the wounds of the broken-hearted, and open the eyes of the blind, that they may see the Comforter, the Holy Spirit.

Do not despair of yourself. The seed of truth and good is not dead. If God has planted it in your heart, he means that it shall grow.

July 18.

YOUNG people are apt to suppose that they can, whenever they choose, leave off a wrong habit, and form a right one, by

merely making a resolution. A young girl sees that she has a quick temper, and she determines that she will henceforth never use a hasty or angry word. Having made this good resolution, she finds before the day is over that she has fallen into the same ill-temper as before, and said the same unkind things. So it is with other bad habits. We resolve to break away from them, but the resolution has no apparent effect. Then we say: "It is of no use. I have tried in vain. I have resolved, and I have not been able to keep my resolution."

To a person who speaks thus I should say: "It is not only true that you cannot conquer a bad habit by a resolution, but it is a good thing that you cannot do so. If a bad habit could be overcome in a moment by a single resolution, a good habit might be lost in a moment. If a man could change his character by a determination, that would show he had no character to change. But this does not prove that a resolution to do right is useless. A right purpose, a good determination, is an important step: it places us in a right direction."

The power of inertia in morals makes it difficult to begin, but easy to go on. The harder it is at first to form a good habit, the more sure we are that, when formed, it will last. The real difficulty is in the beginning. As we go on, we acquire more power to keep in the right way. If the *vis inertiæ* in nature is a good thing, being really an outcome of the larger law which preserves all the forces

of the universe, why is not the *vis inertiæ* of the soul a good thing? Instead of being discouraged because it is hard to build up good habits and a good character, we ought to be thankful for this, as a sure evidence that, when formed, they will last.

July 19.

TRIALS are necessary for us: they are the common lot. But there is always a way of escape if we will look for it. Sometimes it is found in solitude, sometimes in society, sometimes in prayer, sometimes in action. Sometimes friendship will help us. Sometimes the best thing we can do is to tell our troubles to another, and sometimes the only help is in telling them to God. The greater the temptation, the higher the help. To live in the spirit of trust and submission, of hope and faith and love,— this is the surest aid. If we live in the spirit, we shall walk in the spirit. There has no temptation come to any of us but what is common to man; no temptation which is above our strength; no temptation from which there is not an escape. All come to try us and do us good; to humble and prove us, and let us see what is in our heart; to show us our dangers and our weakness. When we have learned these, then we may pray, "Lead us not into temptation"; and we shall need it no longer, and God will command the devil to leave us, and angels to come and minister to us.

July 20.

LET us hold to all that we are able to see of spiritual realities, and so learn to believe and know more. If we cannot believe in the whole Bible, let us believe in a part of it. If we cannot believe in the miracles of Christ, let us believe in his goodness. If the sayings of Paul are dark, let us read the Sermon on the Mount and the parable of the Good Samaritan. If we cannot accept Christianity as a supernatural religion, let us hold fast to it as the best of all natural religions. If we cannot resist and conquer all the temptations that beset us, let us resist and deny all that we can. Begin now, begin to-day, with the determination to do all you can, to have all the faith and hope and love you can, and trust that your heavenly Father will give you help and power and strength to conquer at last all evil, and to gain all good. This is only common sense applied to religion. If I wish to climb Mount Shasta or the peak of Chimborazo, I do not satisfy myself by looking up, and saying, "What an inaccessible summit!" but I go up the mountain, step by step. So let us begin the long but grand ascent which leads to the love of God and love of man.

July 21.

THE Lord reigns: let the earth rejoice! Chance does not reign; Fate does not reign; Man does not reign. He reigns who

forever educes lasting good out of transient evil.

July 22.

IF we trace this spirit of joy to its profound source in the soul, we shall find that it comes from a hope of better things in the future than we have in the present. It is the spirit of hope toward God; hope full of immortality, which rejoices in the coming glory of God; hope born of experience; hope which makes not ashamed. It is hope which inspires courage, which is the spring of progress, without which progress will never take place.

Unhappily, Christians have not always held to this high hope. They have often allowed themselves to doubt the perfect love of the Father, and to relapse into the Paganism of earlier ages. They have thought it a merit to be sad, and have placed religion in self-torture and ascetic denial. They have believed in dark superstitions, in the power of Satan, in a God of wrath, an everlasting hell by the side of an everlasting heaven. Thus the great hope of Christ has been darkened in human hearts. And this is why it is necessary to say, "Rejoice!" "Rejoice in hope." "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." Rejoice always! Not merely when you are well and strong and doing right, but when the clouds of evil and wrong close around you and darken your day. Rejoice always, for God is always near, and his sup-

port will never fail. Rejoice! for it is good and right to hope, and without hope we are without God in the world.

July 23.

TO Christ love was omnipotent,—sure to conquer evil at last, almighty to redeem, with infinite power to save.

The oldest creed in Christendom is that which declares that Jesus is the Christ. The meaning of that creed is that goodness is the real king of the world. The Jewish nation was expecting a Christ of outward earthly power, a temporal king, a son of David; like David, a conqueror of nations, a warlike monarch.

But, as Paul puts it, "No one can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost." That is, no one can believe in the all-conquering power of love who has not in his heart something akin to that spirit. One who thinks that men must be governed by force or imposed upon by contrivances,—such a man can never believe that Jesus is the true Christ. He substitutes another Jesus, coming at the end of the ages to judge the world with power, armed with vengeance, not converting his enemies, but punishing them. To such a man evil seems stronger than good. He believes not in a Christ formed within us, the hope of glory, but in an outward, visible Christ, coming at the end of the world.

July 24.

"BE not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." This single sentence contains the substance of Christian ethics. All evil in ourselves or in others must be conquered by good. Evil can never conquer evil, or Satan cast out Satan. That which makes Christianity a power to improve the world is that it inspires faith that good is stronger than evil, truth than falsehood, right than wrong; and that, in the long run, truth, right, and good must conquer, and Jesus reign until he has subdued all enemies under his feet.

We are, all of us, apt to be appalled by the amount of evil in the world, and to have a frequent access of doubt, when we find it hard to believe in the all-conquering power of good.

This is what is meant by being "overcome of evil." It means not that we are made evil, not that we have become servants of sin, but that we believe in the power of evil. Evil seems so mighty that it is hopeless to resist it. It is in vain to ask in our daily prayer that God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. The rest of the prayer may be a prayer of faith; but over that clause hangs, when we repeat it, a shadow of unbelief. We ask, not expecting to receive. We do not really believe that God's will can ever be done on earth as it is in heaven.

July 25.

I DO not mean to say that it is an easy thing to overcome evil with good. But I believe it is the only way by which evil has been conquered or ever can be. When we think of those who have been our spiritual benefactors, who have made our lives better, we shall find that it has been those who had faith in human goodness. They had more confidence in us, more hope for us, than we had for ourselves. They encouraged us when we were ready to despair. They overcame our evil with their good.

O sweet and heavenly souls, who have had Christ formed within you, how have you in every age been the sunshine, the joy, the hope, of the world! Strict with yourselves, gentle and generous with others, you have been the sacred leaven in the Church and the world. These are the real blessings of our lives, for which we are the most grateful.

July 26.

THE gift of Jesus to mankind has been his faith in the never-failing presence of an infinite love. He, first of all human beings, rose to this perfect and unfailing confidence, and so has inspired the human race with this divine influence, which will continue to work till the whole world is full of the knowledge of God. This is our hope in dark hours, in bereavements, in disappointments, in the midst

of temptation and evil. This is our hope when good seems conquered and wickedness triumphant. This is our hope when we ourselves fail of our duty and fall into wrong. It is that God is still our Father, Helper, Friend, and that all things will end in good at last. This is the hope full of immortality when we stand by the grave of our dear ones, and when we ourselves bid farewell to life. This hope is the power of progress, the secret of improvement, the motive for earnest effort to make the world better and life happier. That is why we are told to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

July 27.

HE is our best friend who shows us that he believes in us; that he has confidence in our capacity to become something noble and good; who has faith in us that we are capable of heavenly aspiration and devotion to all things true and right. Such a noble friend was Paul to his disciples, the lowly, half-developed men of Colossæ and Ephesus. He exhorted them to a virtue nobler than that of which the wisest sage had ever dreamed. He invited them to go up with him to a height of purity of which no Stoic or Platonist had ever had a conception. "The perfect man in Christ Jesus,"—this was the heavenly vision which moved before him always. By means of this great hope he roused and lifted the world.

July 28.

THERE are prophets, seers, inspired souls, in all religions and in all nations. They are those in whom these intuitions of conscience, faith, hope, and love are strong. They are the men of intuition, who see through their inward eye, not their outward eye. They have not believed as every one else believed, but have looked into their own souls for truth, and have found it. They have seen God face to face. In the darkness of night they have seen the rose of dawn, and have announced to all men the coming day. They hold up the heart of nations; they come in great emergencies, to add faith and fire to noble resolutions; they suffer and die for their convictions, and so inspire others with a like resolution. These are the prophets who have been since the world began,—the prophets, unrecognized in their own time, despised and rejected of men, but heralds of every great advance of the human race. Their power lies in the strength of their intuitions. They see God, truth, justice, and beauty as realities, not as probabilities. Inspired by these visions, they are ready to speak their word, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. They die in obscurity, perhaps, and defeat; but their lightest words live and conquer the world, and grow up into great trees, in which all the birds of the air find rest.

July 29.

THAT Christ shall "reign until he hath subdued all things under him" was the firm belief of the apostle Paul. That "every knee should bow, and every tongue confess Christ to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father,"— this was his plain declaration. That all evil should be ultimately swallowed up in good was the distinctly proclaimed optimism of the great apostle, who had seen more and suffered more of the misery and wretchedness of the world than most men had ever dreamed.

All the suffering, all the sin, all the misery, of time and eternity, never made him doubt for a moment the ultimate and entire triumph of truth and love.

July 30.

O DIVINE vision of a perfect time! O heavenly glory of an hour when all sin and shame shall cease, all tears be wiped away, all wrongs redressed! and human souls, redeemed and purified, shall be like the stars of heaven, one star differing from another in glory, but each raying out its own light. With such a hope in his heart the great apostle could bear all things, believe all things, endure all things.

In his far-reaching vision he saw a time when, "in the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth"; when all who died with Adam in sin and misery should

be "made alive in Christ," in peace and love. Nothing less than this could satisfy the desire of that large heart.

The Church has not yet reached this faith. It still disbelieves that good will overcome evil, or that Christ's redeeming power will be sufficient to save all God's children. When that hope is born again in the Church, it will renew its youth. It will see a new heaven and a new earth, and begin once more the course of a united and blessed body having one heart and one soul.

July 31.

ALL things work together for good to those that love God. Things present and things to come are equally ours. The future lies hid in the present; and, if we so act as to possess the present, we also possess the future. The best way to prepare for death is to prepare for life. Make ready every day to live to some good purpose. Put into every day some generous thought for others, some help, some sympathy, some good will, and then you take possession of this world and the next.

To do this effectually and constantly, we must have faith and hope. Love is born out of these. Without faith in a divine presence and a divine love we become discouraged in our efforts to do good. Love to man is born out of love to God. And love to God is born out of faith in him as an all-surrounding, all-attending presence; as one who cares for us because he has made us for himself; as one

always patient with our weakness and folly, and able to overcome our evil with his good. Believing in such a divine compassion and care, which never leaves us, we can receive strength from this source with which to do something for our fellow-men. We can work for others when we know that into our open and trusting hearts new power will always come from above. If God asks us to do anything for others, he will give us the power with which to do it. Thus "all things are ours" when we feel that we are Christ's, and that Christ is God's.

August.

LOVE.

August 1.

BUT best and most blessed of all abiding things is love. Love is the spirit of life, and makes all things live. Without love, life is not worth living. It is in the first look of intelligence which we discover in the infant's eye: it is in the last feeble pressure of the hand of the dying. Nothing is so real as this: it alone has solidity, substance, and essential being. Selfishness is not enduring. In its very nature, it destroys itself. The selfish man is only half alive. He lives alone in a cold isolation of soul.

In all religions the essential part is love. Christianity is the highest of all, because it sums up its whole law in these words, "Love God and love man." And amid all the changes of creeds, the strife of parties, the reforms and revolutions of the Church, this has been one of the unchanging factors. No heresy ever denied love: no papal decree ever denounced piety and humanity. Amid all storms love continued: love had its abode

in many a humble home, in many a meek and trusting heart. In the hardest and most cruel days love prompted men and women to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoner, redeem the slave, cleanse the leper, and bring comfort to the forlorn.

Love abides. This is the very essence of Christianity. And this blessed gift comes direct from God. When the poor woman knelt at the feet of Jesus, he said, "She loves much because she has been forgiven much." Love is born out of our penitence when we look to God for pardon, and find his comfort and peace descending into our heart. "We love him because he first loved us."

August 2.

THAT which makes this earth seem solid is not the rocks and mountains that are in it, but the love that is in it. Love, joining hands with faith and work, makes our life rich and full. These three, neither of them alone,— work which is done in love, love which is born of faith. And it is a blessed thing that, the longer we live thus, the more beautiful the world becomes, the more rich and precious our life seems. It is the young who are oftenest tired of life. As we live on, we seem to grow younger, not older. We find ourselves coming nearer to God and man. We grow more like little children in our hearts. Beautiful is age when it does not become hard and cold, but grows evermore full

of faith and love. The old man looks backward through a life in which he has learned to know the wonders of nature; to know the heart and thoughts of many varieties of human beings; in which he has done faithfully his part in the world in his own place. He looks back over the long perspective, and he sees how kindly God has led him on; how he has been taught by disappointment and success; how he has gone deep into his own heart, gathered up wisdom, become truly free by self-control and self-direction; how he has ceased to think of God as Power and Law only, and come to think of him as Friend and Father. And he wonders that he ever could have been weary of life; he feels the infinite riches of the universe, and thanks God in the depths of a happy heart for the gift of existence.

August 3.

THE heart has a deeper wisdom than the head. Its faith, its hope, and its love predict and assure a better future than the mere intellect can foresee. Everything that is greatly good in the world has been accomplished by the power of faith, not resting on outward evidence, but on the inward evidence of the heart. How has Christianity triumphed? Not by its miracles. Our books teach us to believe in Christ because of his miracles; but who really believes in Christ because of his miracles? We believe in him because we love him. Love leads to

knowledge. He "draws all men unto him." "His sheep hear his voice, and follow him." The head believes in God by means of argument: the heart sees him. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." The intellect reasons about immortality: the heart knows it. The intellect proves Christianity to be true. The heart of man, in all ages, feels the truth of that generous faith which brings God near to us as a Father; which reveals man as a brother; which restrains the tyrant, and breaks the fetters of the slave; which supports the head of the feeble and sick, and opens heaven to the dying eye.

August 4.

THEREFORE is love also a true prophet. It looks through the darkness of the present,—through pain, disappointment, trial, sorrow, bereavement, loneliness,— and sees all things working together for good. The true optimism comes to us when we love. When we forget ourselves, and love others; when we forget our selfishness, and share in God's interest in mankind; when we throw ourselves into life, and follow Christ in his trust in God, his hope for man,— then the heavens again smile. Then the day dawns peacefully, and the night closes serenely. Then we look through all anxiety, and see good beyond. Then, when we lay our beloved in the grave, we have a hope full of immortality in our hearts. Mortality is swallowed up of life.

Our faith in God is faith in good. Let our hearts be wrung with bitterest disappointment and sorrow, we have within us a sure word of prophecy, to which we can continually resort till the day-dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts.

August 5.

WE live also by love. He who loves no one and is loved by no one is only half alive. We need the daily bread of human affection.

All love is of grace. It is never deserved. Nobody ever deserved to be loved; but being loved makes us more deserving than anything else can.

August 6.

MANY persons abstain from prayer because they think they are not good enough to pray. Suppose your child should refuse to talk with you for the same reason. Your little daughter remains perfectly silent in your presence, never shows the smallest disposition to prattle or to ask for anything. You say, "Why are you so silent, my child?" She replies, "Because I am not good enough to talk to you." You would think that a curious reason. You love to have your child overflow with expansive utterance of everything it cares about, to ask for everything it wants. Do you not suppose that God also is pleased to have his children come to him with

childlike trust? I think he is pleased to have us say everything to him we care to say.

Many think they are not good enough to see their friends hereafter. But were they good enough to see them here? Was it because of any merit of yours or mine that God has given to us, in this world, such friendship, such generous love?

What did you or I ever do to earn the tender, never-ceasing, never-resting love of our parents, the noble influence of our friends, the inspiration which has come to us from the wise, the reverent, the pure hearts who have made of us all that we are? If God gave us all this of his free grace here, we may trust that he will give us friendship and love hereafter.

August 7.

MANY think they are not good enough to become members of the Christian Church or to profess their faith in God and Christ. Are we good enough to be inhabitants of this world? Did we ever do anything to obtain a right to be members of the church of humanity? If a man becomes a member of Christ's Church, he must come in as Peter came, and as Paul came, who came not because they were good, but because Christ called them. If we hear the voice of this great Master, saying, "Come to me, and I will give you rest," that is enough.

When, therefore, persons are tormented and troubled because they think they are not

good enough to go to heaven when they die, let them remember that this is so, but also that no one else is good enough. No one deserves heaven. Heaven, certainly, is not of debt, but of grace. Heaven, which means a better life beyond even than this,— a life where we shall be higher up, and less exposed to temptation, sorrow, and evil, with larger opportunities and deeper insights,— this will come to all, not because they deserve it or have earned it, but because the divine wisdom and divine love has ordained that life shall be ascent, rising up, going forward from good to better. Not because we are good enough, but because God is good enough, do we hope to go upward, and not downward, when we die.

August 8.

GRACE means unbought benefits. The immense majority of the good things we enjoy in this life are unbought. What did we do to earn our life? Existence is a free gift. The soul with its divine powers, its immortal faculties, its memory running backward, its purposes running forward, its solemn-voiced conscience, making eternal distinction between right and wrong, its affections, capable of flooding life with the radiance of love, its aspirations, striving upward toward the infinite God,— what did we do to earn this? It is all a free gift to us from God.

And this magnificent universe into which

we have come, with its boundless, inexhaustible varieties of minerals, plants, animals, its skies and sea, its mountains and forests, its sun and stars, its social life, natural history, science, art, literature,— what did we do to earn our share in all these? Nothing. They are of free grace, the outpouring of God's exuberant bounty.

Many persons are gloomy, doubtful, discouraged, because they do not believe they are good enough for heaven. Who is good enough for heaven? Who is good enough for earth? God does not give us this world because we have earned it by our goodness. He gives it because he is good himself. So, if we have a better world hereafter, it will be for the same reason.

Your child comes to you some morning looking very gloomy, and you ask him what is the matter. He says, "I am afraid you will turn me out of doors; and then what will become of me, for I cannot take care of myself?" You ask: "What makes you think so, my child? Do you doubt my love to you?" "Oh, no," he replies, "not at all. But, then, I have never done anything to deserve that you should take care of me. I am not good enough to be provided for in this way. I have not earned it by any past efforts." You say, "My dear boy, I do not take care of you because of your merits, but because you are my child." Is it not probable that God may take care of us, here and hereafter, for the same reason,— not because of our merits, but because we are his children?

August 9.

THE best way to cure our faults is not to fight against them, but to cure them by taking interest in the opposite good. The best way to cure intemperance is to give the intemperate man some higher interests,—to interest him in better things than meat and drink. To cure a man of the love of money, interest him in giving money to good things,—make him take pleasure in giving as well as gaining. To cure a man or boy of cruelty to animals, interest him in the life of animals by teaching him natural history. And to cure men of evil, help them to love the supreme goodness. This was the method of Jesus. So he filled men with the fulness of God; so he vitalized the world with a higher faith and hope. You cannot cast out demons by the help of demons, but only by the power of God.

The best cure for bodily disease or ill-health is to quicken the life of the body, put more vitality into it, fill it full of bodily life. The cure for intellectual disease or errors is to vitalize the mind, quicken its interest in truth, fill the mind with mental life. The cure for moral disease or vicious habits is to vitalize the moral nature, awaken the conscience, rouse the sense of responsibility, make goodness attractive and lovable. The cure for spiritual disease, or sin, is to vitalize the soul, and fill it full of spiritual life by making God lovable. This is what Jesus came to do, and did. "I am come that they might have life,

and that they might have it more abundantly." He did not come to teach a stricter law of duty, but to make law and desire one in making us *love* what is good. "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

August 10.

TO know that there are some souls, hearts, and minds, here and there, who trust us and whom we trust, some who know us and whom we know, some on whom we can always rely and who will always rely on us, makes a paradise of this great world. This makes our life really life. This makes us immortal while we are here. This makes us sure that death is no end, but only a beginning to us and to all we love. It is only love and insight which show us our true selves. Cold sagacity misjudges us: mere sympathy, feeble good nature, soothes, but does not essentially help us. But love illuminated by truth, truth warmed through and through by love,— these perform for us the most blessed thing that one human being can do for another. They show us to ourselves, they show us what we really are, what we have been, may be, can be, shall be.

August 11.

THE affections are a clothing and a home for the heart. God's method is to give us always better and higher affections, and

to make the lower a step upward to the higher. "He who loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?" Human love leads up to divine love. It is a Jacob's ladder, leading up to heaven. Everything which draws man out of himself does him good. The smallest act of sympathy helps us. To say a kind word does him good who receives it and him who gives it. I see two little girls walking hand in hand. They are playmates. They play together. They quarrel sometimes; but they are little friends. That is the first round of the ladder of love, the highest step of which is the divine piety of Jesus toward his heavenly Father.

August 12.

I SEE two young men, fellow-students, seekers of the truth together. They struggle through the same doubts. They have the same bitter experience of evil. They may commit mistakes together; but amid all errors and wanderings there is this golden thread of a generous unselfish friendship for each other. That is good. Let them never be unclothed from that love, but clothed upon with a higher one.

Much of earthly affection is, no doubt, poor, weak, unworthy. It is idol worship: it is blind and foolish, weak and changeable. But, such as it is, it is always better than nothing. Do not destroy it. Fulfil it.

August 13.

I WOULD be very tender of any idolatry. I often find people adoring very enthusiastically books or artists or people who to me seem poor and empty. But I am very careful not rudely to criticise their faith. They think some poetaster to be a great poet. Be it so. I will not say a word against it. They are groping after pearls. They think a man a great orator, and burn with enthusiasm for him; while to me he appears only a rhetorician, a man of words. They admire a preacher who to me seems talking verbiage and commonplaces. Well, who knows what real religion may come to them through this channel? We have this treasure in earthen vessels. I will not be an iconoclast, except when absolutely necessary. If truth requires me to blow a jarring and dissonant blast, I will do it, but not otherwise. Idolatry, in the divine order, may be the first step to true religion. Let it not be unclothed, but clothed upon.

August 14.

THESE may, indeed, be only tents to live in till we reach the promised land; but we know that, when these are struck and folded, we have a building of God waiting us beyond the veil of time. God, who provides the tent for us here, will provide the house there. He who gives us in this life the

wonders and beauties of nature, the lessons of truth, the opportunities for action and endeavor, the helps of friendship, the charm of love, the nobleness of life and the pathos of death, will provide for us better things beyond, "which eye has not seen, nor ear heard."

August 15.

WHEN God gives us love, he gives it forever. Superficial sympathies, based on accident, on proximity, or common interests of the hour are fugitive, but the love which sees what is best in us, and cares for that, is something which cannot pass away. For this is like God's love. He is the God of the living, and loves the living part, the immortal part, of our nature. And so this human love attaches itself to the deepest, noblest, and best thing in us, and often discovers better things in us than we know ourselves, and so helps us most of all.

If we love that which is best in each other, not the fugitive though seducing charm, but the truth and sincerity and earnest feeling in each other's souls, our love to each other helps, and does not hinder. If we vitalize and encourage it by conscience and faith, if we help each other by it nearer to truth, duty, and God, then our love for each other becomes immortal. This love defies accident, absence, change.

August 16.

THEREFORE, O human heart, trust and hope and look forward, and do not doubt nor fear, but go from truth to truth, from love to higher love. We do not wish to be unclothed of this world's affections and interests, but clothed upon with higher. This life is not the end, but the beginning. This poor body of ours, poor, but yet wonderful in its mysterious faculties, is the germ of a higher body. The friend who has left us, the dear child, sister, brother, father, mother, we shall meet again. Yet that heavenly love shall be as tender and as near as in this world,—a home for our heart as it was below.

August 17.

SO God educates us for himself, teaches us how to love him by teaching us first how to love our brother. All true love educates us for heaven. The love of nature is a nascent piety. The delight in God's sky and land, his ocean and mountains, his stars and flowers, his sunrises and sunsets, educates us to love him, the Giver of all. He sends us little children to teach our hearts tenderness. He takes them up to himself, and our tenderness goes up to heaven. The love for heaven, for books, for children, for friends, leads us toward God. Every generous effort to do right, every noble struggle against evil, every warm throb of love for what is good,

true, fair, every patriotic and courageous act of devotion to our country, is preparing us for heaven.

August 18.

THERE is but one thing which can fill the soul full, so as to drive out all evil thoughts and passions, and to keep them from returning with others worse than themselves. It is love,— love to God, looking up to him in daily submission, penitence, and prayer; love to man, animating to generous labors and constant sacrifices, to thoughtfulness and interest for all around us. When a heart is thus full of love, it is safe. No evil thought can enter it. No gloomy feelings of doubt, despair, and life-weariness can conquer its habitual courage and peacefulness. Love is what we need, which suffers long and is kind, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. This never fails. Knowledge cannot always support us. There are hours in which the richest and keenest intellect is clouded, and the throne of thought is shaken. But, when the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint, love, faith, and hope continue to possess the soul, and give it light in its darkness, and serenity amid the stormy hours of trial. Persecuted, we are not forsaken; cast down, we are not destroyed.

August 19.

THE bitter controversialists are popular in their time; for men are fond of fighting, and always admire great warriors, whether their weapon be sword, pen, or tongue. But this kind of controversy is time and thought thrown away. To convert a man from his opinions, you must sympathize with him, and, by sympathy, understand what he means, see the truth in his error, lead him, by the truth he already holds, toward some higher truth or some different truth which he has not yet reached.

Do not despise the sceptic, but, if you have any faith, help him to it. Sympathize with him, for some of his disease is in us all. We are all obliged to pray, "Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief!"

August 20.

AS some manuscripts have been destroyed by an excess of acid in the ink with which they were written, so the acrid, bitter spirit of some great writers has corroded and destroyed their works. Luther's books — full of religious life, glowing with genius, among the most vital writings the world has known — are mostly unread and unreadable, with the exception of that little genial volume, "The Table-talk," in which, among his friends, he shows his happy, kindly nature and forgets to scold.

So does time bring about its revenges. The loud, stormy voices, which filled past centuries with clamor and strife, are silent. These great books have sunk to the bottom of the stream, and disappeared. But words of piety, of simple faith and truth, spoken low, out of loving hearts, find an echo to-day all over the world. The book on the "Imitation of Christ" — which made so little noise at first that we are not sure whether its author was Gerson or Thomas à Kempis — continues to be printed every year, and is read every day by thousands.

August 21.

THE conservatives in our community are a well-disposed set of men, meaning to be just, but, instead of making themselves acquainted with the spirit and motives of reformers, they avoid them, and refuse to associate with them. Instead of noticing the proposition, they impute a bad motive to the proposer. They say that the man is a demagogue; that he seeks notoriety; that he wants office, he wants money. Many others are led by their example into a like unreasoning scorn and invective.

But, if conservatives understand the art of scolding, reformers understand it likewise. This habit has grown to be one of the chief obstacles in the way of reform. A man who is not a reformer goes into some reform meeting, wishing to hear a calm, strong statement of the evils under consideration, the steps to

be taken, practical measures to be discussed, and the duties of friends of the cause. Instead of this, he often hears ridicule and sarcasm against the churches, and sharp witticisms against every person of influence who is supposed not to sympathize with the reformer. He sees neither justice nor wisdom in this torrent of invective, and he is repelled by it. Meantime this is what is most liked and applauded by the reformers themselves. The man who says the sharpest thing is the favorite orator. And, as each class of reformers talk only with each other, this habit increases all the time; and so you have, instead of a great league made up of all the friends of truth, a little coterie who spend their time in scolding, and a great public which goes on its way indifferent to the whole subject.

August 22.

THE root of the difficulty is the same in all these cases. Indignation against wrong is not joined with sympathy for the wrongdoer. Those who are opposed to each other in opinion keep apart. They know nothing of each other's motives, and hence do injustice to each other. Any amount of intelligence will not save a man from this ignorance of his opponent's motives if he keeps away from him. Meantime the simplest person who hears both sides, and talks with both parties, has a much deeper and wider view of the subject than either. The eloquent leaders,

with all their powers of oratory, resource of wit, and trained faculty of speech, have often less real insight of their subject than the unpretending but candid seeker for truth, who refuses to be a partisan, does not abuse his opponents, and can join charity toward the evil-doer with indignation against the wrong.

August 23.

THE first evil of scolding is that it *does no good*, and is, therefore, a waste of time and strength; the second evil is that it *does harm* by irritating the conscience; the third, that it does harm by hardening the conscience.

In order that the truth shall do any good, it must be spoken in reason and love. It is only reason and love which can make a man permanently better. Scolding and whipping may prevent the outward manifestation of evil, but cannot reach the source.

The conscience, like the nerves, ought to be sensitive, but ought not to be irritable. The injury done to the moral character by a wrong action is often best cured by perfect rest. It is like a wound, which heals best by what doctors call the first intention. Before the sinner has repented, scolding hardens him, and drives him farther off: after he has repented, it irritates him, makes him unhappy, weakens his courage, and takes away that peace without which there can be no energy or progress. Where the general purpose is to do right, people need encouragement more

than censure. Aid them by pointing out what is to be done, encourage them by hopeful words, but be careful how you rudely touch the half-healed wound.

August 24.

OH, the sweetness of sweet words! Oh, the beauty of truth spoken in love! Happy the family where rising irritation is always calmed by the soft, tender voice, which comes like balm to the wounded spirit! Happy the church where the minister is not so much a son of thunder as a son of consolation, whose words attract souls, allure hearts to God, and who does not drive, but draw men by the powerful magnetism of his own convictions, conduct, and life! Happy the community where a genial spirit flows through all classes, sects, and parties, where difference is not discord, and fraternity unites hands and hearts in mutual help!

Happy the soul which loves, and blesses with its prayer of love.

August 25.

WHEN the storms of passion and the frosts of selfishness close all communication between our heart and that of our brother man, we may come again into communion with him through the infinite ocean of divine love. "If God so loves us, we ought also to love one another." If God forgives our sins,

we can forgive our brother's sins. Before the immensity of that heavenly forgiveness all earthly hostilities fade away and disappear. To forgive our enemy is to feel toward him as we believe that God feels toward us.

And sometimes, when we are able to forgive others, we feel for the first time that God can forgive us. The true sacrament through which God's love enters our heart is not any outward ceremony, but an act of generous and full forgiveness to those who have done us wrong. When we forgive our enemies, we put ourselves in an attitude of soul by which the forgiveness of God comes to us. When we are hard and unforgiving to others, we shut up our own hearts against God's love. There is nothing arbitrary in the saying of Jesus, "If you forgive others, God will forgive you: if you do not forgive others, God will not forgive you." It is the simple working of a natural law. The same act which closes our heart against man closes it against God: the same act which opens our heart to those whom we dislike, whom we condemn, whom we believe our enemies, whom we look on as having done us wrong, opens our heart also to God. But we cannot really forgive another until we love him. We can say we forgive him, we can wish him all happiness; but while we remain inwardly alienated, having no real communion with him, we do not forgive him. But Jesus says, "Love your enemies"; and anything less than that is not enough. Nothing but genuine love will take the root of bitterness out of our heart.

The work of Christ in the world is to overcome evil with good, hatred with love, war with peace, error with truth. To be a Christian is to be a fellow-worker with Christ in this spirit and method. Therefore, we must lay aside bitterness and wrath and evil-speaking and malice, and be kind to one another, forgiving one another, even as God, in Christ, has forgiven us.

August 26.

I THINK that we believe in God when we believe in that which is divine in all things, when we see in men something divine and noble in the midst of all that is evil, when we see in childhood something divine, and revere the innocence yet unstained by the world. So, too, we believe in God when we love our friends, not because they are of use to us, not because our tastes and theirs happen to agree just now, but because we see and admire in them some innate beauty which God gives to each soul when he makes it; some connate and inborn charm of spontaneous sweetness, or courage, or honor, or aspiration, or reverence, or humility, or conscience, which God gave to it in his counsel before the foundation of the world. And we see God when we love all his creatures, whether they are sympathetic with us or antipathetic, when we overlook their faults and pardon their offences, and care for their souls, as God and Christ care for their souls. This is divine love, true love, which sees God,

which whosoever has dwells in God and God in him. He may have many faults, vices, follies, sins. But this generosity in his heart is the redeeming element. This is Christ born within him, the hope of glory. This gives him a solid inward peace and satisfaction, and makes him assured and confident before God.

August 27.

SOME men who would like to be of use in the world fail in their endeavor because they finish nothing. Their good actions are like buildings begun on a grand scale, but where the funds have given out before they were completed. Some men do enough to satisfy their consciences, and then stop, leaving their good works unfinished. They have had the trouble of attempting to do good, and none of the satisfaction of accomplishment. How many of these unfinished good works we begin! We work a little while for different objects, take a class in the Sunday-school or engage in a hospital or some charity, and then stop and say, "Now I have done my part: let some one else do the rest." But Christianity counts nothing finished while any thing remains to be done. The Samaritan might have bound up the wounds, and then said, "I have done my duty: let some one else take the man to the inn." But his object was not to do his duty, but to save the man. That is the difference between conscience and love.

August 28.

IF our goodness consists not in doing what strict justice requires, but a great deal more, how far beyond any mere justice must the divine love go! If the charm in men and women which makes us love them is in this superfluity of good will, this giving all they have, and doing all they can, how can we love God unless we see the same element in him? We are the poor traveller, wounded by our sins, left half dead in our helplessness and loneliness, with no power to do anything for ourselves. God is not like the priest and the Levite. He does not come and look on us, and then pass by. He does not say, "Do this, do that, or perish forever." He knows we can do nothing till he helps us to do it; and therefore, like the good Samaritan, he comes to us. He does not wait till we are able to come to him. He comes to every one of us, and pours some oil and wine into our wounds. Sometimes the oil and wine consist in human sympathy which God sends to us in our sorrow; human love, which he sends to us in our loneliness. Sometimes it is an opportunity of doing good to some one else which relieves our heart of its own gloom. God's spirit is like the wind, which comes and goes in a thousand ways. It comes to the heart, to awaken its better purposes and feelings, and to make all things new there.

"Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings,"

and sometimes as bright and sweet a light surprises the sinner in his tears. Sometimes it is the aspect of nature, the heavenly peace of a summer's day, the innocent face and voice of a little child in his play, the beauty still more divine on the face of our dead friend. God can speak to the heart by anything,— by a weed, a grain of sand, a dream. He "who rebuked a prophet by the voice of an ass, and warned his apostle by the crowing of a barn-door fowl," can make the meanest thing the channel of his love.

August 29.

"BY this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." Though the silent, unseen, but steady coming of Christ has put an end to many cruelties, does not the ministry of the letter still neutralize the spirit of love in Christian denominations? What but this ministry of the letter prevents to-day the union for which Jesus prayed, and which, when it comes, will convert the world to him? One great denomination stands apart from the rest, clinging to its literal view of baptism as immersion. Another keeps aloof, calling itself "the Church," because of its faith in the letter about bishops. Others refuse to allow pious men to go as missionaries to the heathen, or to be pastors and teachers, because they cherish a hope that the eternal Father may be more merciful to his children than Calvin allows,

or than the letter of a New Testament text seems to assert. And thus this trust in the letter opposes the spirit of Christ's last great prayer that all his disciples might be one,—"As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that all may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." O ye churches which claim to be followers of Jesus, multiply your missionaries to the heathen by tens of thousands, you will never convert the world to your Master till you become one with each other in his spirit of love!

August 30.

WHEN we have a willing mind, everything good and beautiful and true conspires to help us. All nature then becomes pervaded with a diviner beauty, and we see God everywhere present in the advancing or receding year. He smiles upon us in the sunrise or sunset: he seems to hold us in his embracing arms in the long summer days. Our life then grows more full of God. All its events have a providential meaning. None arrive by blind chance or stern necessity. Our friends come to us from God: when they leave us, they go to him. Thus, having nothing, we possess all things. In one sense, nothing is ours: in another, all things are ours. Of ourselves and by ourselves we are nothing, but in God we have all things. For all things are tending inevitably toward that great consummation of being which we desire.

All things are working together for good while we love God.

Grant to us, O Father, thus to give all we are and have to thee, and thus to receive all things from thy love! Warm our cold hearts with the fire from heaven! Lighten our darkness with the knowledge of the great realities of being! Teach us to pray! Lead us into the fulness of thy peace, and into the eternal rest which remains for thy children!

August 31.

IT is remarkable that Paul, the theologian *par excellence*, should be the first to declare that all systems are transient. It is he who says that intellectual convictions, all kinds of knowledge, are to disappear, all creeds and all beliefs come to an end; "whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." And it is not John, the mystic,—the one who preaches love, love, love,—who chants that magnificent hymn to love, but Paul, the theologian. He it was who, having thought so much and studied so much and said words of wisdom which will never die while the world lasts, laid all down at the feet of love, and said, "Love never faileth."

September.

TRUTH.

September 1.

RELIGION and science are like two neighbors, living side by side in mutual friendliness and helpfulness. Science helps religion, enlarges its views, brings it down from speculation to reality, teaches it to verify its doctrines by experience. Religion awakens the soul to a sense of responsibility, rouses the thirst for knowledge, gives impulse to progress, and so animates science with a higher life. It is sometimes thought that these two neighbors are on bad terms with each other; and so we read about the "conflict" between science and religion. There is no such conflict, and cannot be; for one kind of truth cannot be at war with another. Science means truth as seen in nature: religion means truth as seen in the human soul and the human life.

September 2.

THE love of truth for its own sake, which is the glory of science, does not come from any materialistic view of the universe.

It is born out of faith in the infinite. It comes when we see in all truth a revelation of God. It was proclaimed by the apostle when he said, "God is light; and in him is no darkness at all." The old Theosophic doctrine that God is an abyss of darkness, and the modern Agnostic doctrine that nothing can be known of God except his existence, are powerless to produce the enthusiastic love of truth for its own sake which is essential to the progress of discovery. It is the sight of something divine in beauty which makes the true artist, and it is the sight of something divine in truth which makes the true man of science. And this, again, comes from faith in the infinite, the unseen, the eternal, as the source and foundation of the finite, the seen, and the temporal.

September 3.

THE Reformation of Luther was a revival of truth,—a call on all men to think, to look, to form opinions, to stand by their own private judgments. That trumpet-call roused the slumbering intellect of mankind. Then science arose, then art, then literature; then came various reforms; then were born new hopes for human progress, new schemes for political emancipation, for public education, for voluntary and independent churches, universal suffrage, government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The leaders of this great intellectual move-

ment were men absorbed in ideas, who were ready to sacrifice their own happiness, that of their families, that of all other men, for the sake of a doctrine or opinion. But they salted the earth.

September 4.

FOR all thy gifts we praise thee, Lord,
With lifted song and bended knee;
But now our thanks are chiefly poured
For those who taught us to be free.

For when the soul lay bound below
A heavy yoke of forms and creeds,
And none thy word of truth could know,
O'ergrown with tares and choked with weeds,

Thy strength, O Lord, in that dark night
By mouth of babes thou didst ordain;
And thy free truth went forth with might,
Not empty to return again.

The monarch's sword, the prelate's pride,
The church's curse, the empire's ban,
By one poor monk were all defied,
Who never feared the face of man.

"Half-battles" were the words he said,
Each born of prayer, baptized in tears;
And, routed by them, backward fled
The errors of a thousand years.

September 5.

PEOPLE who are in earnest are apt to be a little one-sided, narrow, and fanatical. But the Lord uses such agents to move the world. Do not oppose them, but endeavor to moderate them, and, like Paul, to show, if you can, a more excellent way.

September 6.

LET negation be for the sake of subsequent affirmation. Do not let denying end in denial, but always pass on to something positive.

Treat reforms frankly and kindly in the pulpit as you would in the parlor. Do not be savage to show your independence. Regard those who differ from you as friends, not as opponents to be refuted and put down.

September 7.

LET us remember that the same law which preserves truth when once attained makes the difficulty in its first reception. Reformers are apt to be bitter against conservatives, and call them bigots because they resist so obstinately the new light. But the same inertia which makes it hard to move the steel door keeps it in motion after it has once begun to move. If it were easy to re-

ceive a new truth, it would be easy to lose it again. This is a lesson which reformers are slow to learn; but they need it, in order to be patient and just to their opponents and candid in their judgments. We must be willing to grant that the same love of truth which moves the reformer is the motive which refuses to yield easily or suddenly to his arguments. It is best that it should be so.

September 8.

CHARITY does not mean *indifference* to truth and error. A man is *not* charitable who is indifferent: he can only be charitable to the other side when he has a side of his own. If I do not care about the question at issue, I cannot be charitable to my opponent, because I have no opponent. But when a man is in earnest, when he believes strongly his own opinion, when he is ready to labor for it and make sacrifices for it, *then only* he can be truly charitable; *then* it requires some effort, and shows some Christian spirit, to be able to enter into the mind of an opponent, make allowances for his errors, and admit his truth, and, while continuing to oppose his doctrine, to be willing to love and help the man.

In the great religious questions which divide the world there is an essential truth on one side or the other. We ought not to be neutral. We ought to select our flag, and to stand by it. It is not necessary to be secta-

rian because we like one side better than the other. It is not necessary to be bigoted because we have a distinct and fixed opinion. Make up your mind, and then stand ready to be convinced, if you are wrong. Bacon says, "In this great theatre of life it is permitted to God and the angels to be spectators, but all men must be actors."

People defend their indifference by saying, "Truth is mighty, and will prevail." Yes, it is mighty; it will prevail. But how soon it shall prevail depends on men. If men allow themselves to be indifferent to the truth, if they do not care much one way or the other for this or that opinion, if they will not inquire, then no doubt truth will prevail, but it will be after error has reigned for centuries, and has finally fallen, not by their efforts, but by its own inward tendency to decay and corruption.

September 9.

PAUL says, "If there be knowledge, it shall pass away." Knowledge in its outward form passes away, but truth remains. The outward fact is forgotten, but the soul within the fact lasts. Beliefs change: truth remains.

In the history of opinion we find everything changing. All is flux. The doctrines orthodox to-day were unknown to the early centuries. Yet below all this changing tide of opinion there remains something permanent. The theory goes: the fact remains. Human creeds and doctrines pass away: the deep

human experience of the mind brought face to face with truth remains. Belief passes: truth remains.

September 10.

TRUTH is permanent: it can never pass away. The heart and mind of man are so made that they cling with passionate love to all realized truth, and will hold it though mixed with ever so much error. Religious people cling to doctrines a thousand times over refuted, not because they love falsehood, but because they love the truth with which that error is mixed. No mere logician can make them let go of the doctrine by any argument or ridicule. They will not relinquish it till one comes who can see the truth in their error, and give them that truth in a purer form. Christ took up into the gospel all that was true in heathenism and Judaism; and so Paganism fell, and the Jewish church became the soil of Christianity.

September 11.

MAN is made for progress; but there are two kinds of progress. One kind consists in going forward from one thing to another, from one knowledge to another knowledge, dropping the past behind us in order to attain the future. This is being "eternal seekers, with no past behind us." But another and higher kind is that which gathers

up the past into the present, absorbs history into life, makes old experiences "consolidate in mind and frame." That is the only progress which endures: the other falls a victim to reaction. Reaction in life and history is going back to pick up something we have neglected.

September 12.

THE intellect makes progress either by contending against error, being converted from one view to the opposite, or by calmly growing up from truth into larger truth, from the insight of to-day into the deeper insight of to-morrow, enlarging past knowledge, not losing it. Society makes progress either by revolutions or reforms. The surest progress is always of the latter sort: the best reform is not that which destroys and annuls the past, but that which fulfils it. Science to-day has commonly accepted the idea of change by development for that of change by crisis.

September 13.

TRUTH is absolute, real, eternal; but our knowledge of it is incomplete and partial. Every intellectual statement is an approximation, every verbal proposition an attempt. There is such a thing as truth, and we can see it; but, when we come to put what we see into words, error necessarily comes

in. . . . . But the most erroneous creed may contain some Christian truth which is wanting in the most orthodox; and all are destined to be superseded in that day when we shall see Christ face to face.

Every kind of truth is a word which comes from God, to make us more alive. We live by feeding on new truth. The mind needs to be nourished by new thoughts.

September 14.

WHEN we find two opposite and extreme views, each advocated by earnest, intelligent men, honest in their convictions and bent on converting the whole world to their own faith, where, probably, does the truth lie?

The old answer was, "The truth lies somewhere between these extremes."

But half-views are feeble views. At each extreme there is an idea, a principle, and therefore strong conviction. In the middle there is apt to be only confusion of thought and weakness of purpose. A better philosophy of the human mind has taught us that truth is not in the middle, but on both sides; that one extreme embodies one truth, and the other its antagonistic truth. On either side is conviction; in the middle, hesitation and lukewarmness.

September 15.

ONE source of scepticism is in the false idea that we are passive in our belief. It is not so. When God shows us a truth, it is our duty to cling to it. A man is disloyal if, having seen a truth, he lets it go through indifference; if curiosity is stronger in him than conviction; if he loves novelty more than reality.

September 16.

WHEN we have seen a thing to be right and true and good, we ought to cling to it. That truth which in our calm and sober hours we have accepted, we ought not to let go because, in hours of trial and darkness, we cannot see it. Cling to it still, and you will see it again by and by. There is such a thing as loyalty to truth, which is noble. It is good to stand by the flag in the storm of battle, and when all around seems defeat and disaster. It is good to trust in God, in goodness, in eternal right, in the triumph of truth over evil, when we do not see how or understand why.

September 17.

"HAVING done all, stand."

Man was made, not only to see, to do, to make progress, but also to stand. Until he has learned to stand, he has not learned the whole lesson of life. Amid all change,

we desire something permanent; amid all variety, something stable; amid all progress, some central unity of life,—something which roots itself as we advance, which is loyal to the old while open to the new.

Hence the importance of being able *to stand.* It is important, first, in order to see the truth; second, it is important, in order to retain what we have seen.

September 18.

STABILITY in man is LOYALTY. It is not merely a passive and indolent conservation: it is an active adherence to certain convictions, duties, and affections. Even the tree has a *live* hold of the earth. Its roots are as living as its branches. It is not held to the ground, passively, by the law of gravitation, but clings to it, actively, by the law of life. Much more is man's stability an active and not a passive virtue. To keep to what is old, merely from an indolent reluctance to change, is less meritorious than the stability of a tree; but to cling to the past from loyalty, from conscience,—this is noble. We must stand actively, not passively.

September 19.

IT is the destiny of man to make progress in truth, to forget things behind, and reach out to things before. But there must be something solid beneath his feet, else he

cannot walk. It is not progress to throw away all I know to-day, in order to learn something else to-morrow. To advance in knowledge is not to forget the past, but to take it with us. We put away childish things, we leave the form of truth behind us; but we must not leave the substance of truth. In all mental progress there are some great convictions.

"Truths that wake
To perish never."

There are some convictions which only deepen and strengthen, while all else changes.

September 20.

TRUTH is such a sacred thing, so holy, so venerable, that we must not trifle with it. In public speech and in private conversation, some persons talk for effect, regardless of accuracy. They say what will produce an impression, assert extraordinary facts, aim at excitement, and at last *lie* unconsciously and automatically. They are called *liars*, but it is a disease, not a wilful purpose. They do not know, at the time, that they are saying what is not true. Such is the evil which results from talking merely for effect, merely to produce an impression.

September 21.

IF hearing truth is our food, speaking it is our exercise. We need exercise as well as food, in order to grow; and, as a matter of

fact, we see that only those really grow up into a manly stature who have the courage and loyalty which make them speak the truth which they have seen. This is the daily gymnastic exercise of the Christian,— to utter faithfully, by action and word, his convictions in the presence of those who do not share them; to testify to the truth, whether men will hear or forbear; to be a burning and a shining light in the world; and yet to do all this, not ostentatiously, but modestly, not sharply, but kindly, not in severity, but in love. If the spirit of Christ dwells in us, a spirit of truth and love, we can do it. We see those who are faithful without giving offence; who can say truth which is like a sharp sword, and yet say it so lovingly and gently that no one can be displeased. Such people are the salt of the earth, and while they keep it from decay, while they preserve society pure and public opinion sound, they grow up themselves in all things into Christ. They become more Christ-like every day, more divine and more human, more near to God and to us. They fill us with their peace, joy, and trust.

September 22.

JESUS said, The hour cometh when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and come forth, to the resurrection of life or the resurrection of judgment. Come out of their graves,— the graves of ignorance, error, sin, selfishness, and falsehood; out of the graves of worldli-

ness, covetousness, cunning, and fraud, in which they have buried themselves. He saw that his Father would one day reach every soul, — in this world or in the next world or in some world would reach every soul of man. He saw that sooner or later the reason of man must see the truth, the conscience must feel it, the heart must love it. And so all in their graves shall hear his voice and come up,— the faithful to have their faithfulness rewarded with entrance into fuller life; the unfaithful to be judged, to know at last the evil of their lives, and so take also the first step back toward good: therefore a resurrection, a rising-up, for all,— a rising-up of the good into *love*, a rising-up of the evil into *truth*. He saw that distant day as though already here, because he had spoken the immortal truth, to which sooner or later every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth. And so, dying on the cross, disgraced, defeated, conquered, forsaken by his friends, betrayed by his own disciples, leaving not one on earth who understood him, he could say to his Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have *finished* the work thou gavest me to do."

September 23.

THE divine power of truth can only be realized when it is put into action. If we are hearers, but not doers, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

People deceive themselves more often than they deceive others. Because a man has listened to pious sentiments with joy, he thinks himself pious. Because away from the rush of life, the stress of business, the temptations of the shop and street, the parlor and kitchen, he approves of righteousness, purity, generosity, patience, he thinks himself to have those qualities. But we all approve good in the abstract. Sentiment must be brought to the test of action. Hearing good things and talking well require to be supplemented by work; for we do not know any truth to be truth until we have applied it.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

September 24.

PERFECT truth and perfect love unite in complete rounded goodness. By these two the entire sphere of the human life is filled with strength and peace. All progress, all usefulness, all moral beauty; proceed from these two fountains in the heart.

Without truth, love becomes soft good-nature. Such love as this does no one any good: we need a strong, pure, active love to really help us. Weak love encourages us in our faults, flatters our weaknesses, hurts us rather than helps us. So it ceases at last to be *love* at all, and becomes more cruel than hatred. Better an honest blow from a truth-speaking enemy than weak sympathy from a

friend who excuses our vices and justifies our faults.

September 25.

ON the other hand, without love, truth becomes so hard, so cold, so tyrannical, so unjust, that it ceases at last to be truth. How can we be just to another unless we have some interest in him, some sympathy with him? How can we see any truth unless we care for it enough to look patiently, steadfastly, after it? The sharp logicians who measure everything by the strict scale of abstract reasoning, and are afraid of sentiment, lest it lead them astray, often fail to see truths which are revealed to babes, who have some love mingled with their small intelligence.

September 26.

JUDGE the people by their actions: 'tis a rule you often get.
Judge the actions by their people: 'tis a wiser maxim yet.
Have I known you, brother, sister,— have I looked within your heart?
Mingled still with yours my feelings,— taken of your life my part?
Through the warp of your conviction sent the shuttle of my thought
Till the web became a Credo for us both of "should" and "ought"?
Seen in thousand ways your nature,— in all act and look and speech?

By that large induction only I your law of being reach.
Now I hear of this wrong action: what is that to you and me?
Sin within you may have done it, fruit not native to the tree;
Foreign graft has come to bearing,— mistletoe grows on your bough.
If I ever *really* knew you, then, my friend, I know you now.
Either 'tis, you never did it, or you did not so intend,
Or some foreign power o'ercame you — so I judge your action, friend.
Let outside observers merely note appearance as they can:
We, more righteous judgment passing, test each action by its man.

September 27.

WE sometimes hear quoted with admiration the famous saying of Lessing: —

"Not the truth which one possesses, but the honest striving after truth is what makes the worth of man. If God should hold all truth enclosed in his right hand, and in his left only the ever-active impulse to the pursuit of truth, although with the condition that I should forever err, and should say to me, Choose! I should fall with submission on his left hand, and say: Father, give! Pure truth is for thee alone."

But, with all respect for Lessing, is it not

apparent that such a choice could not proceed from the love of truth? Apply it to scientific truth. What should we think of a chemist, a geologist, an astronomer, who should prefer to be always in scientific error — provided he went wrong in seeking truth himself — rather than to possess the truths of science, if he had to accept them as discovered and taught by others? We should not, I think, call him a strong lover of truth.

September 28.

THE day of judgment is not always postponed until the end of the world. There comes a last day, a winding up, in *this* life, to many men and things. Falsehood and shams glitter and shine for their hour, but finally their last day comes: then they explode and disappear. But it is well when they disappear that some voice, at once friendly and honest, shall indicate the lesson written in their history. Cold, hard, merciless severity will not do. Weak, passionate sympathy will not do. But truth spoken in love is what purifies the air, and makes the world healthy again.

We seldom hear things said in this way. We hear indiscriminate flattery and eulogy on one side, indiscriminate condemnation and criticism on the other. But once in a while comes a voice like this, strong and calm, without passion, without prejudice, finding more good in a man than his best friends ever saw,

saying better things in his praise than his warmest admirers knew how to say, but then bringing him to the bar of absolute truth and right, and showing his essential, radical defects. As we listen, we know that it is not the critic who condemns: it is truth itself which sentences. As Jesus said, "I judge him not; but the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day."

September 29.

JESUS CHRIST was the Prince of Peace, because he lived to overcome evil with good. He was obliged to resist evil all his life, to contend with bigots and fanatics and formalists as long as the day lasted. But he himself lived in a profound peace in the midst of their raging war. His soul was fixed in the love of God and love of man. He was the greatest of all peace-makers, because he introduced into the world that principle of life which is the source of peace. Life, abounding life, makes peace. A live soul is peaceful: it is the soul which is dead-and-alive which makes war.

Jesus fills the soul with life. Life does not quarrel. It grows, it blossoms, it bears fruit. Life conquers death by outgrowing it. In the abounding summer all blades and buds open, advance, expand; and the dead sticks and leaves and grasses are constantly overgrown by life, and so a peaceful activity pervades all nature.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, because too deep, too full, too vital, to be measured by any scale,— this peace of God comes to every soul full of faith. All such souls are peaceful, though strong. The peace of God is the strongest power on earth. Violence and conflict are no signs of the highest power: the highest power in man is calm, steadfast, placid. It does not come in the whirlwind or the fire, but in the still and serene voice of perfect trust and perfect love.

The law of human progress involves perpetual warfare; one struggle over, another begins; one enemy of man conquered, another immediately appears.

Let us all be peacemakers, but not by any mere "mush of concession"; not by hiding truth or yielding to error, but by speaking the truth in love, living the truth in love. Fight, if it is necessary, but with heavenly weapons. Put on the whole armor of God, the very panoply of Christianity.

September 30.

A SHALLOW naturalism and a narrow theology may be at war; but a true science and a broad Christianity lend to each other a helping hand.

What God has joined together let no man put asunder. God has joined together reason and religion, responsibility and freedom, faith and works, scientific progress and spiritual growth, the love of God and the love of man.

Narrowness *judges* breadth : breadth *despises* narrowness.

Let us not judge each other, and let us not despise each other, but open our hearts to all the light and love which God shall send to us, knowing that we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of the eternal truth of God. When there, we shall have little cause to be proud, whether of our orthodox opinions or of our rational Christianity, but shall be grateful if God has helped us to be anything or to do anything for him.

October.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

October 1.

THE Church alone, of all human institutions, speaks to us of immortality, of heaven, of an infinite Father and Friend. It alone supplies the deepest need of the human heart, and is therefore built on a rock; and, no matter what storms of revolution or floods of change may come, it will not fall. The rock on which the Church stands is not a creed nor a miracle, not a pope nor a priest, not ceremony nor habit, but the everlasting need felt by the earthly child for his heavenly Father.

October 2.

EVERY church of Christ has faith not merely in some divine power, but in that divine power which speaks to the world through Jesus of Nazareth. It has faith in that Father whom he revealed, who loves all his children, whose impartial sun shines on evil and good, whose vast laws are without

change or shadow of turning; influenced by no caprice, no favoritism; who takes care of the little sparrow in its nest as well as the monarch on his throne. The Church has faith in Jesus as the Christ; that is, the king who is to rule the world by his truth and love. It has faith that good is stronger than evil, and will conquer it; that right is more mighty than wrong, and will overcome it; that truth will at last prevail over all error, and the kingdom of God come, and his will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. When the apostles went forth to preach the gospel of good news, they proclaimed as the only article of faith that Jesus of Nazareth, conquered, crucified, dead, buried, was nevertheless the true king of the world, and that he would reign until all enemies were put under his feet. That was the rock on which they built their church,— this thorough-going optimism, which could see in all temporary evil a universal good to come; this majestic faith that the Almighty is on the side of justice and love, and that therefore they are sure to conquer.

October 3.

THE Christian Church has not always kept to this faith. It has not always believed that good would conquer evil in this world. It has often postponed the day of judgment to a future life. This present world it has submissively surrendered to the devil, regarding it as permanently given over to sin.

There is to be, it believes, a heaven hereafter, but no heaven here. Men are to be saved in the other world, but not in this. It has, therefore, uttered the Lord's prayer only with the lips, not with the full conviction of the soul. It could not pray that God's kingdom should come and his will be done on earth as in heaven, so long as it had no faith that the kingdom would ever come or the will ever be done.

But the power of Christianity from the beginning has consisted in this confidence: — that the love and truth of Christ are stronger than evil and sin. That good is stronger than evil, not merely hereafter, but in this world, is the essence of Christian faith. The creed of the world is just the contrary. Men of the world, as such, believe that goodness is lovely and desirable, and may be necessary to enable us to get to heaven when we die, but that it is a weak thing here. Not Jesus, but force and fraud are the kings of this world. We are all apt to be swept away by this scepticism. We are often silenced by the authority with which this worldly wisdom speaks, by its appeals to history and experience, forgetting that the wisdom of this world is folly before God. And we forget, too, that the real lessons of history are all the other way: that there is nothing permanent but goodness; that the kings of this world, the Cæsars and Napoleons, all pass away, while truth is immortal; persecuted often, but never forsaken; cast down repeatedly, but not destroyed.

October 4.

SUPPOSE the Christian Church should really believe that what it asks in its daily prayer is possible; believe that the kingdom of God can come here, is meant to come here; and that God's will can be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Suppose this should be the chief aim and effort of the Church,— to put an end to war, to cruelty, to all wrong-doing; to make men honest, generous, pure, truthful, loving. If the Church should devote its main energy, as Jesus did, to seek the lost, and to save them from their present evils; to bind the wounds of the broken-hearted here; to give sight to the blind, feet to the lame, comfort to the sorrowful, help to the poor; to lead those who have gone astray back into the right paths; to make all men feel that God is in our midst to-day, that his infinite love is around us now, that Christ is with us here in this earthly life, that his heart is longing to save the world from its present sins,— if the Church believed this, would not the kingdom of God come and his will be done? With the whole power of the Church put forth in this direction, how soon might we not see these divine results?

October 5.

AND this faith in Christ is also, by its very nature, faith in man. When we say that truth is mighty, and will prevail, we

really mean that the human mind loves truth more than error, is adapted to truth and not to falsehood, and therefore will at last accept it as its master. When we say that good will overcome evil, we mean that the human heart loves goodness more than anything else, and will at last bow before it, and submit to it. Without such a faith, how can any man preach the gospel? How can any missionary go out to teach Christianity to the pagans and savages? Without it we could not have courage to begin nor confidence to persevere. Therefore, I say that every true church of Christ is founded on this rock of faith in him as one who is to be the king of the world, whose heavenly teaching is to conquer evil, replace war by peace, selfishness by generosity, fear by hope, and at last fill the earth with the knowledge and love of God.

This is what the Church is for,—to keep alive this faith in a divine presence and power in this world; to inspire doubting hearts with confidence in the omnipotence of goodness; to encourage the discouraged by its own confident hope; by believing that God's kingdom is coming, to cause it to come; by faith that truth is mighty, to make it mighty.

October 6.

THE churches keep alive the sense of the greatness of humanity. . . . If I did not go to church for anything else, I should

go for this. The sermon might be stupid: then I should not listen to it. The prayers might not suit me: then I should pass them by. The music might grate on my ear: I should not try to hear it. One would stand before me greater than the temple; greater than its liturgy, its prayers, its priests, its ritual,—my brother, man, bowed before my father, God.

October 7.

THE Church is the body of Christ. It is his eyes with which he looks on the sufferings of men with tenderest pity. Through it he hears the cries of blind souls to-day as he heard the blind man crying at the gates of Jericho. It is his hands with which to lift the wounded from the ground and tend their wounds.

The Church is an organization through which the spirit of Christ can work. If hitherto it has been his voice rather than his hands and feet; if it has preached him in the pulpit rather than gone with him to seek and save the lost; if it has taught doctrines about him rather than carried him to a world lying in wickedness; if it has called on men to "come to Jesus" rather than gone in the spirit of Jesus to find and help them where they are,—the time has come, we think, for a change. We wish to take part in the great and opening civilization of the new day and hour. We wish to have part in a Christianity such as the world has not yet seen,—

a Christianity which shall fill all life with the sense of God's presence; which shall cast both death and hell into a lake of fire, which shall give us a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

October 8.

I BELIEVE with Augustine, with Luther, and with Fénelon, with Wesley and Swedenborg, that Christianity is the life of Jesus himself, prolonged and unfolded on the earth. We are told by modern critics that we cannot know much about the historic Christ, there are so many contradictions and difficulties in the gospel narrative, and no harmonious whole. So speaks the lower criticism, analytic, destructive, negative. But the higher criticism, sympathetic, synthetic, positive, creative, ever brings the historic Christ more near to our understandings no less than to our hearts.

October 9.

RIGHTLY understood, Christ's coming is perpetual and continuous. We are not to stand looking up into the sky, expecting him, but to look into our hearts, and around into the world, and find him here now. Do not look for him to-morrow or next year. Let to-morrow take care of itself. Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. Christ comes to us every day, when we are led to think right, feel right, do right.

If Christ were to come to-day to Boston in outward visible person, if he should come surrounded by angels, if he should come with power to raise the dead and to work mighty miracles, that would still be no real coming of Christ to those unprepared to receive him. He would be no nearer to them than he is now.

And to the humble, the upright, the honest seekers after truth, to those who trust to the infinite tenderness of God, Christ is as near now as he would be then. Looking at the outward Christ with the outward eye is not seeing him. We do not see him till we look at him inwardly, with the eye of the soul.

October 10.

THE power of Christianity seems largely to consist in this,—that it has given mankind a great hope. Christ was a revelation of God's purpose for his children. The New Testament is full of hope. While it shows the evil of sin, it always inspires a spirit of courage. It tells sinners that God has chosen them from the foundation of the world to be pure and holy in Christ Jesus. It moves men, not by the fear of hell, but by the hope of heaven. Sin and evil are the dark background to a sunny landscape, where light and love shine with heavenly radiance. The New Testament shows us in God an infinite tenderness to every child whom he has made, a love which nothing can weary. It

calls us out of darkness into a marvellous light, out of sin into holiness, generosity, purity, love. It makes us feel that we can do all things through Christ, who strengthens us. So we find in the gospel this double power,— truth, which shows us what we ought to be; love, which shows us that we can be what we ought, through the power given us by God.

October 11.

LET us not stand in the doorway of Christianity, hesitating whether to go in, because perhaps we have not made up our mind about miracles, or about the supernatural, or about inspiration. Do we gain peace and comfort in the words of Jesus? Is he the best teacher we can find? that the world has found? When we go to him in trouble, do our souls find rest? When we are conscious of sin, does he reveal to us the pardoning love of God? Has he put that spirit in our heart by which we say "Our Father"? Christians are not what they ought to be. Granted. But has Christianity helped to break the chains of the slave? Has it brought light to the ignorant? Has it been on the side of education and progress? Has it built hospitals for the blind, the insane, the deaf and dumb? If we wish to do any good to our fellow-men, do we not appeal to Christ's teachings and promises? Then Christianity is what we need; and let us not hesitate, but enter, and find food and rest and comfort.

October 12.

PERHAPS you have been brought up to believe that the whole Bible was directly inspired by the Almighty, that everything within those lids is the Word of God. At last you discover that the Bible history of the creation contains manifest errors; that the geology of the Bible does not correspond with the discoveries of science; that many actions attributed to the patriarchs are inconsistent with sound morality; that there are impossible miracles asserted and irrational doctrines taught in this great collection of Hebrew literature. You therefore cease to accept the whole Bible as divine. That is your duty: you cannot help it. But, if you stop with that negation, you have merely lost a part of your old faith. One of the props of your life is gone. Do not stop there. This mere negation has not set you free. The letter of the Bible has ceased to be inspired: learn to see more of inspiration in its spirit. Read it again, to learn why this book, containing such errors, has yet been the food of the soul to countless generations; has roused the noblest sentiments of man, has been a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, has been the liturgy of nations, the fountain of glad hymns in the hour of joy, of prayers in sorrow; has brought comfort to sad hearts, the sense of a divine presence and a blessed immortality to bereavement. When you cast aside the false inspiration of the letter, find the real inspiration behind the

letter. And let the sight of those inspired souls, Isaiah and Moses, Samuel and Paul,— leaders of men,— help you to see divine inspiration outside of the Bible also in other great manly and womanly hearts. When you see how God spoke to those sublime souls, learn to believe that he also speaks to us to-day. Believe that the exulting and abounding river of life which pours through the pages of the Bible is still rolling on to-day. Seeing how Moses and Elijah were inspired to rebuke kings and lead nations, let us be sure that it was by the same divine power that Abraham Lincoln was raised up to guide our own nation through its Red Sea to the Promised Land; that Washington was as truly sent as Joshua; that Milton and Channing drank from the same fountain of inspiration with the apostle Paul. Then we shall really believe that every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Light. Then we shall be set free from the bondage of the letter, and be able to open our souls to the coming of the everlasting Spirit, which moves where it will, creating light and life in the midst of darkness and the shadow of death.

October 13.

THROUGH the Jewish nation God has bestowed on mankind four gifts of supreme importance,— the doctrine of monotheism as taught by Moses, the gospel of love

as taught by Jesus, the Bible, and the rest of the seventh day.

The sweet day of rest has come; the cares born of earth are hushed; the stormy waves of business are appeased; rest falls on weary cattle and on the tired laborer. In nearly a hundred thousand assemblies in the United States prayer is offered to the Most High; songs of praise ascend; the Scriptures are read, which command honesty, truth, generosity in the name of God, which forbid, in the same august name, falsehood, treachery, cruelty, wrong. Little children are taught goodness, reverence, love. The sad hearts are invited to come to God and be comforted. The lonely find a home and friends. Peace falls from above on many a sore and struggling heart. Do you wish this to cease? Will society be better if it comes to an end? Let every man and woman consider this seriously, and act accordingly.

October 14.

LET us remember, however, that we come to church not only to receive good, but to do good. It is a misfortune, I think, that our fathers should have laid so much stress on the sermon. There are many to-day who perhaps may not need the instruction or influence of the sermon, but who yet do need the influence of the common worship, of union with their brethren in prayer and in work, and who would be better and happier for

helping in the church. They are now outside of all religious organizations, outside of the great currents of Christian life. I know many young men, who have inherited from the past a Christian education, who now stand aloof from all churches, and never go into the house of God with the multitude who keep sacred time. Their reason is that they receive no good from the preaching. But would they not receive good by joining in common prayers and praises to the universal Father, by joining in common benevolent work with their human brothers? How much good would they not receive by doing good to others, by being in the grand current of Christian sympathy and Christian labor, of which the Church must always be the exponent!

October 15.

A CITY winter means nine months,—from October to July. In that time what may a church do? What may not this church do?

First of all, we may all of us come nearer to God; we may dedicate ourselves more fully to his service; we may increase our faith, our hope, our love. This is the one thing needful,—the root of the whole matter. To try to do Christian work without a fountain of Christian life within is like drawing water from a well by letting down buckets into it. This is better than not to have the water. Better act by a continual struggle

and by hard work than not act at all. But when we have faith in God, in Christ, in the gospel, then it is like the flow of water which pours into a city by aqueducts from distant hills, sending its ever-fresh supplies by a power of its own into every home. Let us all, this winter, seek for more faith in the divine love, seek to live in it and from it: then we cannot help receiving good and doing good.

October 16.

OUR Master says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Let this be the motto of our church this winter. Let us come together to give, to help, to sympathize with others, to find out what others need; to aid in improving all church activities; to assist in our church enterprises, and in others, too. Let us be glad and grateful that God gives us this new opportunity of carrying out the noble and beautiful description of the church given by the apostle,— "The whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body to the building up of itself in love."

The work of a city church must be mostly done during the winter. This is the season of all activities. Let us, then, begin at once what we have to do. Each of the churches ought to do something new and something useful every year for God and man,— exercise a good influence, sow some good seed,

co-operate in humane enterprises. What I wish, most of all, to enforce on you is that you should meet in church, not merely as a matter of propriety and custom, not merely to receive good influence, but to take part in all that can be done for Christian objects.

October 17.

JESUS taught two great truths,—the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man. These vast yet familiar truths sweep the whole heavens and the whole earth, and bring into their enormous circle all sentiments of piety and charity. Whatever of reverence on the one hand or tenderness on the other can ascend to God is embraced in the words Our Father. Whatever of human sympathy or active service may reach out to the farthest man is attracted by the words Our Brother.

The religion of Jesus puts our feet in a broad place. Narrow minds have made it narrow. It has been bound to narrow creeds, narrow churches, narrow forms of piety. But Christianity, as it came from the lips of Jesus, and as it was proclaimed by the apostle Paul, is as broad and as free as the all-embracing heavens. It accepts law, divine law; but, by accepting it and obeying it, it attains to perfect freedom.

I know that many believe that there is more freedom outside of Christianity than within it. But I think they are mistaken.

There is more freedom inside of Christianity than outside of it, because Christianity arouses the soul, awakens the conscience, creates new energies, and thus gives to man a power and a freedom which sets his feet in a large place.

October 18.

AND now we ask, Has Jesus been outgrown? In these eighteen centuries has he been left behind, in any one particular, by the advancing race of man? Is he not still our Leader, Chief, and Friend, the best Friend we have, our Brother, Teacher, and Master? Without him and his religion, what satisfaction is there in life, what hope in death, what comfort in sorrow, what strength in our weakness, what light in our darkness?

Jesus, who is both Son of God and Son of Man, is the natural leader of the human race. On the loftiest summit which the reason can climb we find him. In the lowest depths of human sorrow and sin this great Friend is still by our side. As the world advances on the vast highway of progress, Christ will not become less human or less divine, but more so.

October 19.

ACCORDING to theism, every one must rise by personal struggle and solitary effort. But, according to Christianity, man

rises by joining with this effort the readiness to receive and transmit the divine impulse of which Christ is the Mediator. Man does not make any less effort on this account, but more. By helping others, he helps himself. By becoming a mediator of this Christian life to other souls, he receives more in his own. The law is, "Give, and it shall be given you."

To substitute for Christianity a theism based on the attributes of God or a spiritualism founded on the doctrine of a universal inspiration is not to go forward to a more advanced position, but to relapse into a lower one. The ampler doctrine is the truer. That which accepts Father, Son, and Spirit; means, end, and substance; Christ the way to the Father; Christ's work the condition of coming to the Spirit; the belief which does not destroy the past creed, but fulfils it in a higher form,— this is that which alone can permanently satisfy human wants. It is not by dropping Christ that we can reach God or live in the Holy Spirit. For through him we all have access by the Spirit to the Father.

October 20.

MELCHIZEDEK is another kind of priest different from the tribe of Levi, — not a priest because of being in the formal succession, but by being the true man and by having the right spirit in him. His priest-

hood came from the noble religious soul in him, which saw a supreme God amid the idolatries which surrounded him. He was made a priest by the power of an endless life. Eternity dwelt in his soul. He stood in contact with two worlds. He saw the infinite realities of past and future roll together in the great present. He saw substance below the form, spirit within the letter, life pervading matter, God moving in the world. This made him a true priest, a priest forever; for, ten centuries after, the prophetic, poetic spirit of David saw in him the analogies of the coming teacher of mankind,— priest of the whole race of men. As this King of Justice and Peace mediated between many tribes and made them at one, so should the future priest mediate among all mankind.

This analogy, seen by David, was caught up in the argument of the writer to the Hebrews. This is his answer to their otherwise fatal objection. "Yes," he says, "I admit freely that Jesus was no priest like your priests, but he was of a higher and nobler kind. He did a priest's work far more nobly and truly than they can do it."

October 21.

THERE are times when forms and rules are good, and the priest after the order of Levi is needed. I do not mean to say that order in the ministry is not expedient, but that our great High Priest transcended these

limits, and took his position on a deeper and more universal priesthood than that of form, ritual, or succession. It would have been easy for God to have caused Jesus to be born from the tribe of Levi; but Divine Providence chose otherwise, to teach us that the true priest stands on a more profound basis of reality than any church can give; derives his ordination from a holier source; is in the apostolic succession not of any limited church, but of all true teachers of the race since the world began. It seems strange that in any church men should prefer the ordination of Aaron and Levi to that of Melchizedek and Christ,— prefer legitimating a priest by studying out his genealogy, and proving that he stands in the right order of descent, to legitimating him by finding him like Melchizedek, "without father or mother, without beginning of days or end of life; made like to the Son of God, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

Every Christian, therefore, is a priest. Every one who has faith in God as his Father and Friend can communicate that faith to others.

October 22.

CHRISTIANITY is not only deeper, higher, broader, better than any other religion, but essentially different from every other in this: that its truth is so absolute and universal as to be fitted to become the religion of mankind.

The only progressive religion in the world to-day is Christianity. It unfolds itself into new forms, puts forth new branches, and makes, every day, a new heaven and a new earth.

October 23.

TO say that Christianity is supernatural, is to say, not too much, but too little. Nor is it enough to say, "Christianity is the exclusively true religion." We must go farther, and maintain that it is the *inclusively* true religion.

Christianity has received into itself all the good of many systems,—the philosophy of Greece, the laws of Rome, the mysticism of India, the monotheism of the Jews, the war between good and evil taught by Zoroaster, the Scandinavian faith in liberty and progress. All the prophets who have been since the world began, and all the civilizations of the past, have, like the wise men of the East, brought their gifts to the infant Messiah.

October 24.

IF we are in Christ, life becomes new. Nothing prevents life from seeming old, stale, flat, and weary like having an object,—something we are interested in, something we love to do. The higher and better this object is, the more of interest it adds to our life. Did you ever watch a beehive, and see

the interest these little creatures take in their work, sailing, full freighted, through the air, dropping down hastily by their front door? The good God has put into the hearts of these little things such an ardor of work that their small lives have to them all the interest of which they are capable.

But God has provided better things for us than for bees and ants and birds. An infinitely deeper and richer life may be ours, only we have to find it for ourselves. We find it when we are living in the spirit of Christ. Any one who is doing a Christian work from a Christian motive finds life becoming interesting to him, and he is straitened till it be accomplished. Oh, there is no end to the joy and freshness of existence, if we can live with Christ in our hearts!

O sacred heart of Christ! worshipped by Catholics in their prayers! if we could only understand thee aright, only feel the infinite longing of love with which that heart beats for us all, only feel how Christ comes for each of us to-day, how he sends help into our souls, how he waits, day by day, looking for us to come!

October 25.

JESUS comes as his truth comes, as his love comes. He comes with his Father to dwell in us, and we in him. Sin is conquered. The last enemy, death, is overcome. Christ comes to redeem us from the power of all evil. Then heaven cometh, and now is.

Then, God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven, heaven begins here. It is here already in its seeds and roots; and we have the foretaste of the world to come, the first-fruits of a higher life, while we are yet dwelling in this.

October 26.

THE hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The hour cometh when it will be seen that God is the best friend we have in the universe, and that we can trust in him always, and pour out our souls before him.

These are the unchanging, unalterable facts of Christianity. Faith is the foundation,— faith in God as an infinite Friend; faith in Christ as the way, the truth, and the life;— faith in ourselves as the children of God, whom he loves, and who, therefore, must have something in us worth loving. And hope, always reaching forward, seeking, praying, working for a kingdom of heaven to come below, for a kingdom of God to begin here and continue hereafter. And love, the bright consummate flower of human life, that which is essentially and forever divine, which makes us one with God and at peace in our own souls. Faith is the foundation on which our knowledge rests, hope is the motive-power urging us forward from good to better, and love the heaven within, which makes a heaven around us evermore.

October 27.

WHEN Jesus said, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth," he alone on the surface of the earth knew what true worship was. Men worshipped God, as though he loved sacrifices; as though he took pleasure in seeing his creatures torment themselves; as though he were far off, and could not easily hear; as though he were angry, and had to be appeased; as though he loved to be praised. But Jesus saw, in his heart, that diviner worship, the love of a child to its father and mother; the trust of a weak creature in a perfectly wise, good, and great Being; the confidence of a sinful creature in One all mercy and compassion; the worship which does not need to speak, in order to be heard; which is the motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breast; that worship, which, when it shall come, will make every place a church, every day the Lord's day, all work devotion, all joy thanksgiving, all events blessings, and all nature and life full of God.

October 28.

ON the deep foundation of Christian experience all Christianity rests. It is the solid rock beneath the Church, like Peter's faith, which flesh and blood had not revealed to him, but the Father which is in

heaven. All belief in Christ and Christianity, founded on hearsay, which flesh and blood have revealed, is unstable. Human teaching, the authority of others, the belief of parents and friends, the outward blessings and advantages of religion,—these are only, like John the Baptist, sent to prepare the way of the Lord. Not till we come to God ourselves, by personal submission to the law of right, personal trust in his all-sufficient love, do we have any real Christianity. After that, if we speak, we speak what we know and testify what we have seen. If men fall away from religion and become unbelievers, it is because they have never really had any true religious experience. For what we have once seen, once known, of God, Christ, duty, love, immortal hope, is a possession forever. Heaven and earth may pass away; but this divine word, once seen and known, shall never pass away.

October 29.

ON this solid personal experience the whole future of Christianity must rest. This is still the rock on which Christ builds his Church, and which will forever resist all that can injure or destroy. Out of this deep, broad, living Christian experience shall come that future Church of Christ which shall combine variety with unity, works with faith; which shall be broad enough to adapt itself to all human diversity, deep enough to satisfy all human needs; so progressive as to walk

abreast with all human development; so aspiring as to bring God's kingdom into this world, and make heaven upon earth. But the Christian experience, out of which all this grand future shall grow, will be nothing narrow, nothing formal, and not a confused emotion. It will be the vision of God's truth and God's love, the light of things eternal. It may come suddenly or gradually, but it will be always essentially the same. It will consist in the sight of the divine holiness, justice, truth, order, and law, producing obedience, and the sight of God's pardoning love, saving grace, spiritual influence to redeem and bless, producing faith, hope, love.

October 30.

THE hour cometh, and now is, when Christian doctrine shall be redeemed from the Jewish and pagan errors which have clung to it, and so be brought back to the simplicity of Christ; when men shall no more be taught to be afraid of God. They will no more be taught that man is all corrupt and evil. They will be taught to see in every soul something good, something allied to God, some conscience, some heart, something of holy fire lingering under the ashes of vice and sin. The hour cometh, and now is, when men shall learn to respect human nature. The hour cometh, and now is, when they will look on the vicious and the criminal with pity, not contempt, and try to help them out of

their evil; and when those who have been abandoned, and left without sympathy or brotherly aid, shall be sought out, and taught, and saved. Then the Christian Church, united by the holy spirit of humanity and brotherly love, will come together, and be at one, all working together in the great cause of human improvement. That hour cometh, and now is.

The Christian Church has placed Christianity in the worship of God, who is over all and in us all. It has seen God above us,—not God in nature around, not God in man's human soul. Its religion, therefore, has gone into worship, into churches, into Sundays. But the hour cometh, and now is, when Christianity is to be seen in the street, in the shop, in all human life, and God to be felt as "all in all."

October 31.

AROUND this divinely human character, Son of God and Son of Man, laying aside their prepossessions about him, Christians must one day unite, and be willing that all men shall sit at the feet of the Master, and hear his words. Then his sublime prayer will be fulfilled, "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Not until the Church is thus one can the world be converted to Christ.

This unity will not be a tame monotony,

but the consent of many tones in one vast harmony of purpose and work. We shall not be all absorbed in one organization, as the Church of Rome has dreamed, gaining union by sacrificing freedom; nor shall we remain divided as the Protestant Church has been, preserving freedom and losing union. According to the image of the apostle, we shall be many members, but one body, one denomination being the eye, another the hand, another the foot, but all working together to bless and save the human race. What evils could resist such combined action? With such a united Church, how long would the outcast heathen in our cities be left uncared for? How long would Christian nations continue to wage pagan wars with each other? How long would Materialism, Agnosticism, Pessimism, Atheism, the spiritual diseases of our time, resist the radiance of this new advent of Christ to the world? Theology, which will always remain the most interesting of studies, having Christ himself as its centre, will then be fed continually with living bread. Its scholastic character will disappear. It will give us, instead of theories about Christ, "Jesus Christ himself, the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." Faith in him will mean living in his spirit, trusting his promises, feeling his sacred presence with us always. Christ will be more and more the friend of the soul, the strength of its life, the guide of its thought, the inspiration of all our days.

With this inspiration, theology will be free and progressive, adapting itself to all the needs of human life, and yet solidly based on the deep experience of the heart, on the life hid with Christ in God.

November.

EVERY-DAY RELIGION.

November 1.

THERE is a strange, tender beauty at this season of the year, which we all must have felt. The air, during some days of the last week, has been singularly pure and full of health. No mountain air, no Italian air, could be sweeter or purer. The woods and hills have put on their autumn dress of beauty and pride. The declining year has robed itself in majesty before bidding us farewell. And I think: "O beautiful world, world most full of beauty, which God has given us, why do we not enjoy thee more? Why are we so restless and discontented and unhappy; at war with ourselves, with those around us, even at war with Providence, when it seems as if we had only to open our hearts to all this infinite tide of God's love, and be happy?"

November 2.

THE phrenologists make reverence the religious organ. I think it one organ of religion, but not the only source of religion.

It leads to worship, devotion, and the exercise of piety. But piety and devotion constitute only one part of religion. Those who have a great deal of this lovely natural tendency within them enjoy prayer, enjoy worship, enjoy religious books, religious hymns, and religious meetings. The sentiment of piety is sweet and holy, but religion is also action and thought. It rests on a deep conviction of the reality of God's being, of duty, of immortality. We must not suppose that one cannot be religious who has not, by nature, a love for worship; for religion comes to us in many ways. A person to whom it is not natural to look up in adoration, who does not pray the prayer of sentiment, who has no tendency to natural piety, may be just as real a Christian. He may come to God through conviction and conscience. He may pray to God because he sees that prayer helps him, gives him strength to do his duty, to resist temptation. If you have a good deal of natural piety, be thankful; but, if you have it not, be not discouraged. There are other ways of finding God.

November 3.

WE do not want the Jewish Sabbath revived; for that is a day of restraint and gloom, and it was dropped by Christianity in the beginning. On the other hand, we do not want a pagan and secular holy-day, sanctified by no sense of a divine presence and love. It should not be for mere church-going

on the one hand, nor for mere amusement on the other. It should rest both the body and the soul, the mind and the heart. It should prepare us to go to our work next day in a better spirit, with new hope, courage, devotion to principle, faith in God, love to man. Real recreation is re-creation. It is what puts new life into all our faculties.

The Lord's Day fulfils the Sabbath, taking all that is good of that, its seventh part of the week redeemed from work to rest. It fulfils the "Sunday," taking all that is good of the pagan holiday, its freedom from heavy obligations, its absence from care, its innocent pleasures. But it fulfils both in something higher. It fulfils the physical rest of the Jewish Sabbath by rest of the soul, by freedom from anxious doubts and fears. It fulfils pagan pleasure by a deeper joy born of faith, hope, and love.

November 4.

THE sense of reverence needs to be educated. It is cultivated by looking up, and not down; by choosing for our associates the best and wisest men and women; by seeking for companions the intelligent, the generous, and the good. It is cultivated by looking for the good in men and things rather than the evil; by seeking truth rather than error; by reading noble books in which this spirit prevails; by choosing the company in which serious and noble things are treated seriously.

In such society the best part of our nature grows, while among the flippant and the frivolous we, also, become small and empty. It is good to believe in heroes and heroism, in saints and martyrs. It is good to read and study the lives of the generous and disinterested, the pure in heart, those who suffer for righteousness' sake. Avoid the atmosphere which is full of sneers at generosity, which doubts sentiment, which distrusts conscience, which calls all religion hypocrisy. Look for truth, for goodness, for honesty, and you will find them. It may seem very smart and witty to speak irreverently of parents, elders, the past, of religion, the Church, the Bible; but you have to pay a heavy price for that wit. Your mind grows flippant and mean. That which comes out of your mouth defiles you. This is the harm of profanity. It does not injure God to take his name in vain, but it injures you. Every time you utter an oath you are laying another stone on the wall between yourself and heavenly things. You are degrading your nature, darkening your mind, making faith in things unseen more difficult. But all serious and earnest conversation on high themes lifts us up nearer to that of which we think and speak.

November 5.

THE chief diseases of the conscience are stupor and ignorance. The conscience may be inactive or it may be badly in-

structed. The sins of the time, the crimes against society, the swindling transactions, the defalcations, the betrayals of trust, the repudiation of public obligations, are not usually deliberate violations of what is seen to be right, but rather come from consciences stupefied, sophisticated, and uninstructed.

The education of the conscience is of three kinds. It needs to be awakened, to be enlightened, and to be trained. It is awakened by being taught the obligations we owe to God and man; that man is under law; that no one has a right to do as he pleases, but that all are responsible to God and to the truth for every action of their lives. It is roused by the doctrine of the judgment to come, by being taught that all our lives are to be ultimately known and seen in the light of eternal truth, and that every man is to give an account of himself to God. It is the duty of the Church to arouse the conscience by these solemn truths, and to show to all men that for every idle word they are to give an account in the day of the revelation of God's truth; that there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor anything hid which shall not be known.

November 6.

USE and improve, or lose. This is the sentence pronounced on each of us by all the courts of God, in the physical, intellectual, and moral world. Use and improve

your muscles and your perceptions, or they will gradually, but certainly, fail. Use and improve your memory, your understanding, your judgment, or they will become feeble. Use and improve your conscience, or it grows torpid. Use and improve the powers which look up to an infinite truth, beauty, and goodness, and they lift you toward these. Let them sleep, and they cannot see this kingdom of God, this divine element in the universe. The fool, who has not developed his spiritual nature, says in his heart, "There is no God." Nature reaches its hand to Revelation to maintain this law; and both, with concurrent voice, cry, "Use and improve, or lose."

November 7.

LET us follow these simple rules: —

1. Look for good, not evil, in all things. Cultivate the habit of seeking the best in every person and every event. The bane of our life is that cynical contempt which finds in all things only weakness, only something to be criticised and despised. Seek good, as Jesus sought it, everywhere; and, if we seek, we shall find. Faith in God is faith in goodness; and, conversely, faith in goodness is faith in God, and leads to him.

2. Do always the best you can. Be not satisfied with doing as well to-day as you did yesterday, but look up to something higher and better. Look upon each new day which

comes as an opening into a higher world and a better life. When an opportunity of doing good comes, think that God sends it. Be faithful in small things, because they also are divine duties, full of heavenly peace, and may lead to the greatest blessing.

3. Select the best influences, read the best books, see the best people. Surround your mind and heart with what is highest. We can never escape the influence of our environment. If we habitually associate with those who disbelieve in God, in human goodness, in the possibility of progress, we shall take that tone ourselves. If we go with those who make this life a playground, who live only for self-indulgence, we also shall drift in that direction. But, if we seek the companionship of the pure and generous, the upright and honorable, their lives will send an influence into ours, and we shall find it easier to be generous ourselves.

November 8.

EVEN the use of money may teach us higher things than prudence, economy, and judgment. We may also be educated in this way to generosity and benevolence.

Benevolence and generosity are not impulses, but habits; that is, by practice, the impulse may become a habit. Impulsive benevolence may do more harm than good. To give is an art requiring study and practice. God loves a cheerful giver; but he

also loves a judicious giver,—a giver who is willing to give time and thought as well as money. Giving money may be like pouring water on the sand or like planting a seed in good ground. You may help a man in a way to teach him to lean on you, and to take away his self-reliance and self-respect. Or you may help him in a way that enables him to help himself, and encourages him to go forward in a career of activity and usefulness.

The principle is the important thing: where this is, the right method will follow. Only we must remember that giving is both an art and a habit; an accomplishment which is to be learned, and a custom to be practised. The mistake made by many persons is to suppose that they can devote all their thought and energy for years to accumulation, and afterwards learn how to use aright what has been thus gathered. It takes as much time and thought to learn how to spend money as to learn how to make money. So that, sometimes, a man who has shown great talent and energy in collecting a fortune stands helpless before it, not knowing what to do with it after it is acquired. Whereas, if he had begun in youth to practise the right way of using property as well as acquiring it, he would have the double satisfaction of receiving and giving. For there is no way in which wealth can bring so much satisfaction to its possessor as when it is wisely and generously applied to all good objects.

November 9.

BUSINESS life, which is full of temptation to insincerity, has also an opposite influence. It often educates men to fidelity. If the majority of men did not usually keep their engagements, business could not be carried on. There is a code of business honor which educates many men to truth in other things. To such men business is a religious education. The idea of fidelity to one's engagements is often found where we least expect it. It is a sort of sheet-anchor holding the soul to truth amid the wreck of many virtues.

It is not so much opportunity as fidelity which conducts to the greatest results. The ships with which the Northmen discovered Iceland, Greenland, and the coast of Massachusetts were not much larger than our little pilot boats. The apparatus with which Faraday made his discoveries was of the simplest sort. Ferguson became a great astronomer by lying on his back in the sheep pastures, measuring the distances of the stars with beads strung on a thread. Thus fidelity in a little leads to knowledge of much.

November 10.

IF we look for a Christ coming in the sky, sitting on the clouds, surrounded with visible angels, blowing an audible trumpet,

we shall not see the real Christ who is here at our side in the streets of Boston. That is my objection to prophetic expectations,—that they dull our souls to the ever-present realities of God and heaven.

The real Christ will come to you to-day if you will. When you go to your work, if you ask of God a right spirit, if you begin the day with the desire to be of use to some one, to be in a spirit of true sympathy with those about you, and go through the day trusting in God's presence and help to enable you to be of use to your fellow-men, you will have Christ with you all the day. You will not see any shining cross in the sky; but you will be able to bear your earthly cross, and will find yourself brought into kindly relations with others, able to help them in simple ways, giving and receiving sympathy. This is the real coming of Christ to us; and then we hear him saying, "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethen, ye did it unto me."

November 11.

PERHAPS Jesus comes to us in the form of our country, crucified between two thieves. Its public offices are seized by robbers: its sacred ballot-box, the palladium of its liberty, is violated by fraud. We are asked to give a few days every year to the service of the country, but we cannot leave our shops long enough even to go and vote. Yet we talk loudly of the blessings of free

institutions. We boast, when we meet a foreigner, of our glorious republic. O Judas! You betray your Savior with a kiss!

The time will come when all places of business will be closed by law on election-day, just as on the Sunday; when cheating at the polls will be treated as worse than sacrilege; and when every man who does not vote will be punished by fine or disfranchisement.

November 12.

THE time has come when legislation should be devoted to the high work which our great position requires of us. With our opportunities, we can do what no other nation can. Other nations are hampered by old customs, class privileges, vested rights, time-worn traditions. We are free, strong, untied to any past. Great social questions demand from us their solution. We ought to call on our public men to study such questions, to devote themselves to live issues, no longer to give up to party what was meant for mankind.

What, then, are our duties as a people at the present time?

The first political duty is to break the power of machine politics. The power of the machine consists in possessing the offices, and using them as bribes. The downfall of this power will be found in the success of the civil service reform. Let all offices be given by competitive examination, and let

no office-holder be dismissed except for cause. Let no man win an office by the favor of a politician, but only because he is the best fitted to hold it; and let him hold it during good behavior. This is the first great duty of the American people if they would regain their own freedom.

November 13.

AGAIN, there is the great evil of intemperance, which demands the action of the State. Let a commission of the wisest men and women be appointed to consider carefully the subject in all its bearings. Instead of discussing, year after year, license or no license, prohibition or local option, let the whole subject be examined without reference to party. Let some wise and practical plan be adopted for limiting the sale of liquor, for preventing the young from being tempted, for shutting up saloons, and for offering the laboring people better pleasure, innocent amusements. Hard-working men and women rush into intemperance because they need some kind of excitement, some sort of joyful sensation. Let every town in the State take pains to furnish them with something better,— with halls for social intercourse, dramatic entertainments, pictures by the stereopticon, of the wonders and beauties of the world, good music, works of art, lectures on science and natural history, rooms well warmed and lighted, rooms for conversation and reading. This is

what the State might do, what towns might do, in which private liberality might co-operate; and this would remove much intemperance by removing its real cause.

November 14.

AGAIN, there is the great question of penal legislation, which needs an entire reform. At present our jails and prisons are often called reformatories, but they are mostly schools of crime. The whole system needs to be radically changed. If the legislature of Massachusetts shall appoint a commission for this purpose, and have a plan framed, of prison discipline and laws corresponding thereto, adapted to the whole State, we might see the time when, as in some of the prisons of Ireland, men would come out of prisons really reformed, and easily find honest work and happy homes. Is not this something which Massachusetts might do, not only for itself, but for mankind?

It is idle to attempt to carry forward the strong, and let the weak drop behind. Society is like the human body, in which, if one member suffers, all will suffer. The only truly conservative power is in that Christianity which is like God, and is not willing that any should perish.

Because we despised the negroes, calling them an inferior race, only fit for slaves, we paid the penalty of the awful Civil War. If we say that the Chinese have no rights we

are bound to respect, that the Indians have no rights that we are bound to respect, can we escape the consequences? No. Despise and neglect any of your fellow-men, call any man common and unclean, forget the principles of human brotherhood, and the laws of divine retribution are sure to demand of you the penalty. You cannot escape it by talking about the survival of the fittest. Society must be reorganized on Christian principles, or be always unsafe. It can be so organized. There is no kind of business but may be carried on upon Christian principles.

November 15.

OUR present system of tariff taxes about a thousand articles imported from abroad. It is kept up by a powerful lobby which breaks down every attempt to alter or improve it. It puts heavy duties on the raw materials of manufacture, on iron, steel, lumber, wool. It is based on a fundamentally false and unchristian principle; namely, that each nation is to think only of its own interests, and that the interests of other nations are necessarily hostile to its own,— that, if other nations gain, it must lose. This is not only unchristian, but absurd. The interests of all peoples are so bound together to-day that, when one suffers, all suffer; when one is prosperous, all prosper. In this country we have adopted the principle of China, and one which China has nearly outgrown,—

the principle of exclusion. The United States, by its tariff, has made itself the China of Christendom. The moral influence is as bad as the political and commercial. We not only tax our own people and shackle their industry, but we teach them that the poor foreign laborers, ground down by oppression, are not our brothers, but our enemies. Why, in order to make a few people here rich, should I increase the poverty of a thousand laborers in Germany or England? The time must come for this to cease.

November 16.

FINALLY, let women take their part in public affairs, as they are beginning to do. I do not complain of those who oppose woman suffrage. Every real reform needs opposition, and grows stronger by opposition. But I cannot doubt that the time draws near in which the peculiar powers of women are to be used by the community in helping to remove social misery, to elevate the poor, to do away with pauperism, to be guardians to the wards of the State, to soothe the shattered nerves of the insane, to arrange the domestic life of hospitals, of prisons, to care for sick souls as well as sick bodies, to infuse humanity and Christianity into legislation. The hour cometh and now is when woman shall use her gifts, not merely to win admiration, but to bring some sunshine, some rays of beauty and tenderness, into rude homes, lonely

and hopeless hearts. And the basis on which all this must rest will be woman suffrage. Woman shall carry refinement to the polls, and become the companion of man in this as she is meant to be in all of his work. She shall go there, not as a privilege, not even as a right, but to take her part in a great duty,— in doing something for the nation and the institutions which are doing so much for her.

November 17.

I SHOULD like to see Sunday made in every family the happiest of days; a day in which no gloom is allowable; a day on which every one of the family should bring all his gifts of good-humor and inventions of kindness to the rest.

I hope that Christian men and women will not oppose innocent recreation on Sunday, will not endeavor to confine it to religious exercises, or to bring back the old Puritanic Sabbath which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. But let Christian men and women, who have happy homes and opportunities for recreation themselves, on other days, seek to bring suitable pleasure to those whose lives are hard and cold and empty. Let them try to make Sunday a bright and happy day for all; a day to lift up the soul to God, and bring man nearer to his brother. Let every Sunday sing the angel's song to all human hearts of "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

Then we shall better understand Herbert's tender verses to this day: —

> "O day, most calm, most bright,
> The fruit of this, the next world's bud, . . .
> The week were dark but for thy light,
> Thy torch doth show the way."
>
> "Thou art a day of mirth;
> And, when the week-days trail on ground,
> Thy flight is higher, as thy birth:
> Then let me take thee with a bound,
> Leaping with thee from seven to seven,
> Till that we both, being tossed from earth,
> Fly hand in hand to heaven."

November 18.

IT has often been the case that, while knaves have been ingenious in their rascality, good people have gone in a blind and helpless way about their good works. It has become a proverb that religious people are easily imposed upon, that they have little knowledge of the world or of human nature. If their purpose is right, they are contented. They are apt to adopt this want of judgment as a rule, and to say, "Do right, and leave the result to God." But, since the Lord has given good people brains, why not use them? Once in a great while we find a man, like Dr. Franklin, who is as sagacious in doing good as others are in doing wrong. He discovered ingenious ways of helping those who were in need. But charitable people often give in a way to create more suffering than they re-

lieve. Philanthropists go blindly on their way; patriots rush forward, inconsiderate of obstacles; religious people have a zeal for God without knowledge. But Jesus taught his disciples that they ought not only to be as harmless as doves, but also as wise as serpents. With the devotion of martyrs ready to die for their cause, they must join the utmost good sense in working for it. It is not enough to mean to do good: we must accomplish something. Conscience, which only wishes to save its own soul, may say, "I will do right, and leave the result to God"; but love, which desires to help its neighbor effectually, puts its mind as well as its heart into work. It acts like the good Samaritan, who did not merely bind up the poor man's wounds, and then leave him, but put him on his own beast, carried him to the inn, took care of him there, and, when he went away, made arrangements to have him taken care of as long as he needed anything. We do not want a blind, fanatical philanthropy, but a sagacious philanthropy and a wise patriotism which keeps to its end, but carefully considers the means.

November 19.

ASCETICISM throws away a great power given by God to help and improve us. It abandons to evil what might be a vast motor force leading to good. John Wesley saw the true principle when he adapted hymns

to cheerful tunes, declaring that the devil ought not to have all the good music. The principle of amusement may be used to make all study, all culture, all improvement, attractive. Thus the study of history has in our day, by Macaulay, Motley, Carlyle, and other writers, been made as entertaining as novels, — much more so, indeed, than the majority of novels. We ought to change the natural desire for amusement into the higher emjoyment of amusement connected with study and useful labor.

To all amusements apply the following rules: 1. Let your amusements be inexpensive, so that many may share them. 2. Let them be social and open, for whatever is open to all eyes is more likely to be innocent. 3. Let them be such as do not leave you unfit for your duties, but which refresh your weary mind and body, so that you can return to your work with renewed strength. 4. Let them not be such as degrade and corrupt and enslave you to a habit, but such as elevate, strengthen, and purify the soul. The amusements which stand these tests are innocent, useful, and Christian. But the chief thing to remember is this: that men need some sort of recreation; that, if they cannot have good amusements, they will have bad ones; and that, therefore, it is the duty of all, instead of merely condemning wrong and evil recreations, to seek to replace them by better ones.

November 20.

WE glorify God with our body by keeping it in good health.

Good health is the basis of physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. Invalids have sometimes been distinguished as thinkers and workers. A powerful soul will triumph over bodily disease, but usually a sick thinker has something sickly in his thought. A certain amount of vital energy is necessary to give weight to the best argument. To be a great prophet, it is necessary not only to have inspiration and conviction, but also to possess a body able to endure fatigue, instinct with magnetic force and physical energy. So I repeat that bodily health is the foundation of all rounded self-culture, all integral development. I fully admit the power of the soul, under great spiritual and moral excitement, to compel a weak body to do its bidding. This is one of the most eminent proofs that soul is the king, and body its subject. A great soul may inspire a sick body with strength; but, if the body were well, it would obey yet more promptly and effectually.

While a healthy body helps to make a healthy soul, the reverse is yet more true. Mind lifts up, purifies, sustains the body. Mental and moral activity keeps the body healthy, strong, and young, preserves from decay, and renews life.

November 21.

I DO not believe in any minute self-scrutiny. I believe in a general self-examination, once for all, or once in a great while, and then in looking to see whether the engine is doing its work; in daily self-examination, not of the motives, but of the conduct, of the actual life. Do not look within, to see whether you have sinned against the Holy Ghost or whether your feelings are right; but look without, to see what you are doing for others, what you are saying, what your temper and spirit are to those about you. If the engine is working well, and the vessel is running, you may assume that the boilers are in good order.

November 22.

PARENTS do not intend to discourage their children. But they sometimes do so unintentionally, by not being able to put themselves in the place of the children. Parents and teachers often imagine that all children are alike, and think that what one is able to do another ought to do. But children differ in their organization, and some find it hard to accomplish what is to others easy. Nor do the children themselves understand what the difficulty is. Parents and teachers are apt to assume that, when a child does not do as he is told or as he ought to do, he is wilfully disobedient. So they think that they ought to punish the child, or, at any rate, they

show that they are offended and hurt by the child's behavior. But, when the mysterious and complex chords of a child's mind are jangled and out of tune, he cannot do the thing he would, though he does not know why. There is a temporary moral derangement of his faculties. Your watch will occasionally stop for no good reason that you can perceive. Then it begins to go again as well as before. But the machinery of a watch is far less intricate and delicate than the motor forces of the human soul. I think a great many children have been discouraged because they could not learn their lessons, and were called stupid and thought themselves so, when perhaps a little pains taken by parents or friends would have tided them over the difficulty. And many have been thought obstinate and perverse when all they needed was sympathy, patience, and kindness to help them out of the transient mood of bad temper into which they had fallen. When they are discouraged, they give up all attempt to do better. Do we not all remember having had just such feelings when we were children? We needed to be encouraged, not blamed.

November 23.

IT is not enough that we have secured universal education: the next step is to elevate it, to take it out of traditions, to make it practical and vital. Much has been done for this in our country from the time of the

teaching and experiments of Horace Mann down to those recently made in Quincy. But far more is needed. Every child in this country should have the opportunity of an education which should first enable him to earn his own living,— an industrial education. Then he should be taught the great principles of national life, the principles of justice, freedom, truth, on which our institutions are founded; then the history of the nation, the lives of its great men, the love to God and to man which make the essence of all religion. Every teacher should keep before his mind this fact,— that he has these children in his hands to inspire with an ardor for what is noble, true, and right, not merely to drill them in some text-book.

November 24.

THE chief difficulty with our religion is that it is too stiff and formal; it is put away by itself, as something for Sundays; it does not show us God, as Paul said, "not far from any one of us,"— in the deep blue sky, in the glowing sunlight, in the music and poetry which touch our inmost hearts, in the love of a dear friend, in the hand which touches ours in our sorrow with a magnetic thrill of sympathy. And, if a better thought or purpose arises in our heart, and we long to know and love God and goodness, this also is God, who touches the soul as the musician the strings of the harp. The harp has stood

voiceless and covered with dust for years; but one day the master comes, and draws from it symphonies of celestial joy, and makes it sing thanksgivings and allelujahs like those of heaven. Our heart is thus silent until God touches it: then it rises into strains of peace, courage, hope, love.

November 25.

THE greatest soul and the largest heart that ever lived on earth had for friends some of the simplest of men and women. How he loved those disciples, and loved them to the end, educating them by slow degrees to comprehend a very little of his thoughts, hopes, and purposes! Yet what a gulf remained between his mind and theirs! He could not make them understand the spiritual nature of his kingdom, the probability of his death, the rising from the dead into a higher life. But still he loved them,—the unstable, impetuous Peter, the sceptical Thomas, the ardent soul of John, Martha, Mary, Lazarus, Mary Magdalene. He loved these simple, undeveloped minds. For his greatness enabled him to see in them the capacity which no others could see, of becoming at last his apostles, missionaries, and martyrs. He saw in their present fidelity a guarantee of their future power. They were faithful in a few things, and could become rulers over many things.

And what he saw in them God sees in us.

We, also, are weak, ignorant, full of errors, faults, and sins. We have faults of temper, faults of character: we are careless or selfish or forgetful of our duties. But if we are trying to be faithful, if we are beginning to do what is right, God sees in that small beginning a power which his grace will help to unfold into perfect truth and love. If we are faithful in that which is another's, he will give us that which is our own.

November 26.

THE cure for bad temper is, first, to learn to obey one's conscience, and acquire a habit of doing what is right; and, second, to learn to forget one's self, and acquire a habit of living for others. Then there enters the soul that good temper which is higher than good nature, more lasting and more profound than good humor,—the good temper which grows deeper and purer and sweeter with advancing years, which no wrong can imbitter, no misfortune chill, which sits in the sunlight, and enjoys clear day when darkness falls around. Such a one is "his own music, his own health." He has a summer day all the way to heaven.

Conscience and love, when they govern the character, and are accepted as its rulers, produce this heavenly peace in the soul. All the powers fall into their places, and become harmonious under their sway. And these again are elevated to their supreme place, when we come to know and to love God.

Love, sitting in the heart, touches all the keys, and brings out all the music. If we desire to do what will please God and what will help man, we presently find ourselves taken out of our narrow habits of thought and action; we find new elements of our nature called into activity; we are no longer running along a narrow track of selfish routine; we are necessarily brought, in the providence of God, into new relations, have new and difficult duties; but the result appears in a healthy state of mind and heart, and that perfume and aroma which we call good temper.

November 27.

THEREFORE, the first condition of all true life is a supreme love to God and goodness. If, each day, we seek, first of all, to be in a spirit of good will, to be open to sympathy with those around us, to do for love of God whatever work he sends us, to do for others whatever our hand finds to do, then we shall have that "perfume tempered together, pure and holy," which shall make the day sweet and the night serene,— the peace passing understanding which Christ's love gives, and the world cannot take away.

Have we not sometimes seen persons on whom this ineffable dove of peace seems always to brood?— some persons whom nothing could disturb,— no accident, no disappointment, no disaster; who never seemed vexed, never discomposed, never sore, never out of

temper; who were impregnable to all assaults of evil; who were like the rock in the sea over which the great billows break and roar, but which stands unmoved, and emerges at last calm and firm as ever.

What produced this divine serenity, subject to no moods, clouded by no depression, this perpetual Sunday of the heart? It was not merely good-nature, not the accident of a happy organization. It was deeper than that. It was the perfect poise resulting from a Christian experience. It was the habit of looking to God in love and to man in love.

November 28.

IT has been usual for preachers to speak of the temporal things which pass away as though they were therefore worthless. But they are of infinite worth, if they are the means of reaching that which shall abide. If we can change time into eternity, wealth into generosity, thought into knowledge, opportunities which pass away into faith, hope, and love which abide, then riches, talents, and all outward visible things have a divine value. That which can become an infinite good is itself almost an infinite good. We will not, then, despise these things which God lends us because they are not yet our own. We will bless him for the simple joys of every day, the simple affections of time, the common, every-day work of life, the springs and summers which come and go, the money we

make and spend, the business we transact; for all are parts of that Jacob's ladder which reaches from earth to heaven.

O my heart, learn, then, to love God through his works! Love the infinite truth and perfect beauty in the universe and in human lives, by the finite duties of each passing hour. Love all that is good here, and so love the infinite goodness here and beyond. Look away from darkness to light. Seek the best things in all God's children, by whatever name they may be called. Respect and love goodness, wherever it may be; and believe that all the goodness in thyself and in others must come down from the Supreme Goodness, and lead back to him. Turn away, O my soul, from all things false, base, and mean. Look up to the pure and perfect heaven of truth which hangs its deep canopy of blue above us, unsoiled by the passing cloud,—the home of the eternal stars, the highway of the majestic sun, the emblem of a divine purity and an illimitable peace.

November 29.

THERE are always two handles presented to us; and every day, if we listen, we shall hear God say to us, "Choose to-day which to take!" We can take hold in everything which befalls us of the handle of doubt, of anxiety, of fault-finding, of fear, of pleasure, custom, expediency, personal gratification and self-seeking; or we can take hold

of the handle of trust, of hope, of candid, liberal judgment, of duty, personal conviction, right, and generous, self-forgetting good-will. Our days will be sweet or bitter, events will seem gloomy or bright, the world a good world or a bad world, according as we take everything by one handle or the other. The art of life consists in taking each event which befalls us with a contented mind, confident of good. This makes us grow younger as we grow older, for youth and joy come from the soul to the body more than from the body to the soul. With this method and art and temper of life, we live, though we may be dying. We rejoice always, though in the midst of sorrows; and possess all things, though destitute of everything.

November 30.

THE best and highest of all influences is that which comes to us when we walk daily in the presence of our heavenly Father. What a difference it would make if we should every morning look up, open our hearts, and seek for guidance, good influence, a good spirit from that divine Power who is always waiting to be gracious! "Waiting to be gracious"; waiting till we give him an opportunity of blessing us; knocking at the door of our heart till we are willing to open it to that which is most tender and blessed in the universe. The goodness of our best friends sometimes grows weary; but his is never

tired out by our folly or our sin. The best and noblest human heart is not always prepared to meet our emergency; but God's love is at hand in its fulness every hour.

Let us surround ourselves with all this human and superhuman help, thus to meet the exigencies of our life.

December.

LIFE ETERNAL.

December 1.

THE problem of human existence may be stated thus, How can we change time into life? In some men the mental, moral, and spiritual life and energy continue to increase so long as they remain in this world. While the body is growing old, mind and heart remain young: while the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day.

Time cannot be detained; but, while it is passing, we may be able to change it into something which will last always,— that is, immortal or undying life, or what the Scriptures call eternal life. For immortal life, eternal life, means that kind of life which does not decay and change,— not future existence, but present fulness of being. Bodily life decays with years; but all of immortal life we have within us will last unchanged, never growing old, never wearing out. Our business is to

change the bodily existence, measured by time, into spiritual existence, belonging to eternity.

December 2.

GOD is in nature; and so the man who loves and studies nature receives life from that study.

But God is also present in man. Those who are interested in their fellow-beings, who are laboring for the progress of humanity, seeking to save the lost, advocating reforms, helping their neighbors,— they also become full of life. They are in communion with God, and drinking at the great source of eternal life.

December 3.

THE years, as they pass on, are changed into life, partly by God's providence, and without any effort of ours. It is done by a law of our nature. God has so made us that, while we grow old in one way, we grow young in another way; while we are becoming more weak in body, we grow more strong in spirit. That is the natural tendency of things, if we do not oppose it by our own wilfulness. If we accept patiently and trustingly what comes to us from God, there comes with it an inward strength and peace. What we have to add on our part is trust, submission, fidelity. Let us be loyal to our work, whatever it is. Whatever our hand finds to do, let us do it

with our might. Let us forget the things behind,— disappointment, sorrow, the unkindness of others, remorse over ourselves. Leave them behind, and reach out to things before, — to deeper knowledge, larger usefulness, purer love. And so, while the outward man perishes, the inward man will be renewed day by day.

One of the most convincing arguments for immortality is the undying appetite of the soul for knowledge, love, progress. As we approach the term of life, it never occurs to us that it is time to fold our arms, close our eyes, and bid farewell to nature, poetry, art, friendship, business. As long as our faculties permit, we take exactly the same interest in life as if we were to live fifty years longer.

December 4.

I THINK that, if we have a sincere desire to know and to serve God, the years change our religion into life. We cease to harass ourselves or others much about mere questions of dogma or sect. A very few central truths satisfy us. Trust in God, love to man, are enough. Our prayers cease to be formal, and become a habit of the soul,— waiting on God, looking to him for strength, dwelling in his infinite peace. Our faith in Christ turns to love. What to us are questions about his nature, whether supernatural or not, about his transcendental or primeval being? We know that our joys and our sor-

rows touch his heart; that, when we wrong man, we wrong him; when we help man, we help him. We all, in our different phrases, still look to him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We learn to see in Jesus not Master and Lord only, but tender Brother and blessed Friend. We obey him best when we are true to what is right and good.

> "Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
> What may thy service be?
> Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
> But simply following thee."

So Christianity becomes a reality and a part of our life. It ceases to be profession, and becomes strength and peace. The outward part may perish, but the inward part is renewed day by day.

December 5.

WHAT is meant by the kingdom of heaven? It is the reign of God, first in the human heart, and then in the human life; the reign of truth and love; the reign of the Messiah foretold by the prophets, when men should beat their swords into ploughshares, and when the desert should rejoice and blossom as the rose. It is the reign of Christ here and now: it is Christianity in this world, beginning here, continued hereafter. The kingdom of heaven is not heaven in the other world, but heaven in this world; not heaven

hereafter, but heaven here. It is true that it is continued into the other world; but it begins in this world. Heaven itself is the invisible, spiritual world of God; but the kingdom of heaven is that world descending into this,—God with us, the tabernacle of God with men. The kingdom of heaven means Christianity here, or Christ reigning in the heart, in the Church, in society, and in the State.

December 6.

THE outward heaven opens for every man directly out of this inward heaven. There is no locked door between. It is an open way directly upward. When we enter the inward heaven in our own soul, we are on the way to the heaven beyond. If the heaven in the soul is not open, the heaven beyond is closed. Peter and the apostles do not sit by the gate of any outward heaven, but by the gate of the heaven in the soul; and they hold the keys, and offer them to us.

What are *the keys* of the kingdom of heaven? The keys are the power by which the door into this kingdom shall be opened. The kingdom is Christianity; the door is Christ himself; and the key is whatever reveals Christ. Jesus says: "I am the door. Through me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

December 7.

GOD makes a new heavens and a new earth, wherever the truth and love of Jesus go. The new heavens first, the new earth afterwards. First the inward convictions, then the outward life. First the seed, then the plant, the fruit last of all. We are not to try to do our duty that God may love us, but, because God loves us, therefore let us do our duty. We are not to try to be good in order to go to heaven, but go into heaven now, by faith, submission, gratitude, patience, hope, love; and then we shall easily grow up into all things. In order to grow, plants need sunshine. In order to any mental, moral, spiritual growth, the human plant needs sunshine. People trying to make themselves fit to become God's children by painful and lonely effort seem to me like the vines in a dark cellar, stretching up their long, weak, sickly branches toward the light which shines feebly through a few small openings. Only believe that you are God's children, and that he loves you and will help you to correct all your faults, and grow up into a Christian life, and you are like the same vines planted out in the summer sunshine and June air, and fed by the dews and the softly falling showers.

December 8.

WHEN we seek to know what heaven is to be in the next world, we must ask what it is here. For, certainly, the kingdom of heaven comes also in this world. There are hours of heavenly peace in this life: we sit sometimes in heavenly places with Jesus, even now. Heaven is the peace of God which passeth understanding.

This heaven below comes from the three elements which are to abide,—faith, hope, and love. Faith means the sight of the invisible reality which is below the passing appearance. It is the evidence of the reality of truth, goodness, wisdom. We endeavor to know, because we believe there is really something to be known. Faith, therefore, is the condition of knowledge. And what a joy and peace come to the soul from knowledge! Knowledge of the laws of the universe, knowledge of the divine work in history, knowledge of our capacity of improvement, knowledge of Christ as a personal friend and benefactor!

Knowledge abides in the other world because faith abides,—faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Here we see as in a glass darkly, there face to face. We may there learn to understand the nature of life, the nature of the soul, the enigma of moral freedom, the cause and reason of the existence of evil, all which are hidden from us here. But, as knowledge enlarges, faith will extend itself further, and root itself more

deeply in the soul. Far beyond what we know will be our trust in the unknown abysses of divine being.

December 9.

AND hope also will continue in the other life; and this means that there will be progress hereafter as well as here. To hope means to look forward to something better; but, unless that something better can be reached, the hope must perish. Therefore, continued hope implies continued progress. It means constant growth and development. It means ever-increasing knowledge, activity, power; ever-increasing capacity for spiritual improvement; a never-ceasing ascent toward God,— powers growing more angelic, activity becoming more divine.

And we may say as the surest of all certainties that love will abide,— love of those who are above us in grandeur and beauty; love for those who are beside us in sympathy and fellowship; love toward those who are most helpless and needy, the souls which sit furthest down in darkness and the shadow of death.

Love here is one of the best things we have; but love here is only in its rudiments. What may it not become in the other world, when we shall be lifted into communion with the wise, the good, the noble, the beautiful, who have gone up and on; when we shall be surrounded by their sympathy, blessed by

their friendship; when Christ shall come to find us with the angels and archangels, and when we, in our mansion, in our sphere, shall be able to work with them in theirs, for the advancement and redemption of the universe.

December 10.

THE wonderful description of charity, by the apostle Paul, is not rhapsody or declamation; nor is it the account of an ideal super-angelic state, impossible for us here, but to be reached in some heavenly world. This divine power of love is possible for us all. Only let the love of God and man enter the soul, and you have in you the elements here described. You will find it not difficult to "suffer long and be kind." It will seem a simple thing not to envy, not to boast, not to behave unseemly, not to be always seeking your own. Whereas before you were easily provoked, now you smile at provocation, and are unruffled by injury. You become able to "bear all things," to "believe all things," to hope for all good in the midst of evil, and to "endure all things" to the end, patient because sure that the Lord reigns.

December 11.

THIS was the supernatural element in Jesus, to be able to bring down heaven upon earth; to make immortality present; to incarnate the Messianic hope in his own life.

The hour cometh and now is when we shall understand Christianity better, and see that now is the day of salvation. We shall see that the work of the gospel is to show to us God present with us; to show that Christ is "Immanuel," God with us; to show that heaven and hell are here; that Christian salvation is a present salvation; that immortality must begin now; that we must have eternal life abiding in us while in this world.

Christ, to be of any use to us, must be a present Christ. The historic Christ of the New Testament, and the ideal Christ of Christian anticipation, must be realized in the present, in order to help us. The hope of glory is Christ within us. The study of the Gospels is necessary to make us acquainted with Jesus as a person; but this person must become our friend in all our daily walk, in order to save us from evil and sin. Christ foretold that he should come again as a Holy Spirit. We must feel him present as the Holy Spirit in society, in history, in providence, in our own heart. We must feel him present in all true reform, in all courageous struggle, in all noble endeavor.

December 12.

THERE are hours of bereavement which come to us all, when those we love the most and who love us best disappear from our side and leave us alone. In those sad moments we say: "Shall I ever see thee

again, my brother, my friend, thou whose love for me was so wonderful? Has this most blessed gift of human life been given only to be taken away again? What proof have I of immortality? The old arguments, which seemed strong enough when I had all I loved about me, are too weak now! Open your lips, O secret, hidden from the foundation of the world! Where have they gone, the wise, the tender, the noble souls whose friendship made life worth living?"

At such times argument is worthless. We do not wish to have a future life made probable: we wish to know it. And Jesus never argues for immortality by our methods of reasoning. He beholds it by a mighty intuition, and speaks of it with a certainty which awakens our own deepest faith. He says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." "Because I live, ye shall live also."

The only sufficient evidence of future immortality is present immortality. He who lives now in the presence of eternal things,— God, truth, justice, infinite love, a perfect Providence,— he finds immortal life abiding in him. This inward experience of eternal things makes us sure of undying being. Death disappears from our sight while we thus live: only life remains. Every prayer for strength to do our duty brings us into communion with the unseen world. Every faithful effort to do well, every hour of patient endurance, puts us into communion with the things above. Thus Jesus, by lifting us into a nobler region of present life, plants within

us convictions of immortality. "He who lives and believes in me shall never die."

December 13.

THE power of the resurrection is in this,—that it abolishes death. It teaches us that death is really nothing. What we call death is a step on and up. It is a step upward to all, even to the worst man, to the most impenitent sinner. Resurrection strictly means ascent. Translated rightly, it is *going up*. They who have done good go up to the resurrection of life, they who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. The good go up to receive more life: the bad go up to see themselves as they are, to be freed from self-deception, to know their folly and sin. There is keen suffering, no doubt, when the man who has deceived himself in this world, prided himself on his cunning, his fortune, power, success, sees himself as he is. But that suffering is good for him: he is higher than he was before. God's hell as well as God's heaven is above us, not below us. We go up to it, not down.

Since God gives death to all his creatures, death must be as necessary a good as life. Death is a universal gift of God. Every creature that lives must die. Therefore, death is no punishment, no evil, but a part of the universal plan and law of progress.

December 14.

IT is probably no abrupt shock to the one who appears to us to die. To himself he only seems, I suppose, to be placed in the midst of new scenes, new friends, new occupations. We shall be no more surprised, I imagine, at finding ourselves in the other world than we were at finding ourselves in this world. Softly we were cradled into existence here, gently we shall be lifted into existence there. There, as here, we shall be in a world of surrounding beauty and wonder; there, as here, we shall find ourselves born into a home and a society; there, as here, by slow degrees we shall understand our new home and our new work.

December 15.

THE rising of Jesus is to-day the source of comfort to thousands of broken hearts, to fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, friends and lovers. We look up and see the heavens opened. We see dear and noble friends standing in that divine light, dwelling in the fulness of that heavenly love. As we live from God, as we dwell in things unseen, as we love and hope, the unseen world becomes more near and present. If we look down, we see only the earth: when we look up, we behold the everlasting stars and the city of God. If, then, we would believe in immortality, we must live an immortal life. If

we live in the presence of God and immortality, our eyes will be opened to see them. The eternal life then abides in us. We sit then in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. The vast future surrounds and embraces the present, and gives dignity to our finite life. We belong, every one of us, not only to earth, but to heaven, to a never-ending future, a perpetual progress. "All things are ours, whether God, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come."

December 16.

THE resurrection of Christ also teaches us that those who ascend to God continue the same persons they were before,— that they have the same character, only elevated; the same individual essence, only purified. They are, as Bryant says,

"Lovelier in heaven's sweet climate, yet the same."

For the *poets* are the prophets still, and often tell us the truth by an inspiration more orthodox than that of the theologians. No true poet ever for a moment doubted that he should know his friend hereafter, though theologians may sometimes doubt it; for the heart which is illuminated by inspired thought can read beforehand the immortal and infinite quality in the soul, — that which is to make the future angel. When poets describe their friend, it seems extravagance to a prosaic

nature; but it is the ideal nature of their friend they see and know,—the future angel in the present mortal.

December 17.

JESUS calls death a sleep. The ancients and moderns have called death the sister of sleep. Lewes, in a scientific work, says this is a mistake; that sleep has nothing in it like death. Yet perhaps there is a deeper analogy than science can perceive. Death is not destruction: it is repose. The little child, full of wakeful life, hates to go to bed, longs to sit up later; but the tired child drops sweetly into his little bed, the flushed cheek resting on the round arm. In all my experience of death-beds I have met only one case of a person who was unwilling to die. Usually death comes as sweetly as sleep, bringing with it a positive joy, and revealing beforehand to the soul something of the love and peace which lie beyond these shores of time.

December 18.

SOFT as an infant's sleep shall be the coming of death to you and me. Sweet shall be that rest as it falls on the weary soul and exhausted body. Tenderly shall the death cloud envelope us, and hide all familiar things from our failing sight. And when we wake again, with no abrupt transition, with

no astonishment, but with a serene satisfaction, we shall find ourselves softly led into new being in the midst of old and new friends.

December 19.

WE often read and hear discussions on the question "whether we shall recognize our friends hereafter." How can we ever doubt it? If love abides, are we not to know those whom we love? What would immortality be if we were to be separated from all the loved ones, the knowledge of whom has made the very essence and sweetness of our human life? Would that be immortality if we left behind us the richest part of our souls? The best that is in us has come to us from love to others and their love to us. Let that perish in forgetfulness, and we should go into the other world only half alive. We should have lost the best part of the results of our earthly life. That we should be thus separated from our friends was not the view of the great teacher. He emphasized in his last wonderful conversation with his disciples that his "going up" was not going away from them. He said: "I go away, and come to you." "I go to prepare a place for you. And, if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

December 20.

SHALL we know each other in the other world? Yes: far better than we know each other here. The progress of man implies a more intimate knowledge of his fellow-man. Animals seem to know each other chiefly in their external relations. Man, in his lower state, does not enter very deeply into the souls of those nearest to him. As he ascends, he knows them better. He understands more of their character, hopes, purposes, needs, qualities, defects, and so is able to help them much more effectually. But still how little we know of each other, how difficult is communication, how hard to tell what is within us! How we misunderstand each other! How we misinterpret each other's motives! How seldom comes an hour of real intercourse when soul speaks to soul! But, in the higher world I believe we shall enter easily and naturally into the most intimate communion, shall know as we are known. There all disguises and concealments, all diffidence and distrust, shall fall away from the soul; and we shall have the joy, perhaps the highest joy we have known on earth, of coming into intimate union with those we love. The heart-rending misunderstandings of this life will cease. The cruelties born of ignorance will be no more. The harsh, cold, bitter judgments we pass on each other will be left behind.

December 21.

IF in a long life here I have gained anything which is worth keeping, it is the knowledge and friendship and love of pure, generous, noble souls. Am I to lose that great inheritance? Am I to go into the other world poor, lonely, homesick, alone? I do not so understand the lessons of experience or the facts of observation. When all other memory fades from the mind of the dying, when his other thoughts are bewildered, the other impressions of time effaced, he still shows by a faint pressure of the hand, by a feeble sign of his head, that his love remains. The last look of the dim eye seeks the faces of those he loves. The last faint whisper of the failing voice is a murmur of blessing on those dear ones. Love is stronger than death: will it not survive the grave?

Yes: when I open my eyes on a new world, I expect to come once more into the company of those who have been my inspiration, my comfort, my joy, in this life. I shall learn what these years have been teaching them, and they shall be again my friendly companions and helpers. I shall see again the parents and the dear children whose love has sweetened my life. I shall be a little child once more myself. Yes; and I hope to come very near to my Master, Jesus, and to have my errors corrected, and be taught the alphabet of a higher language of truth. Not all at once, for the laws of gradation and limitation will apply there as here. But, if faith and

hope and love abide, then there will be always more of knowledge, more of work, and more of love in that divine beyond.

December 22.

SOMETIMES we go up into a mountain summit of thought, as when Jesus and his disciples ascended the Mount of Transfiguration. We are taken away from the lower world, and our faces are transfigured in the light of an opening heaven. Sweet and holy hours come sometimes to all of us, when life seems worth living, and we feel a profound rest. All weariness is gone, all loneliness: we have a perfect peace in our heart. We say, like Peter: "Let us stay here. Let us put up tents here, and live always on this enchanted ground." But the inexorable current carries us on, and we descend again from that mountain. It recedes into the pale distance, and stands at last almost a transparent cloud on the far horizon. Yet we occasionally turn back and look at it, and are encouraged by the knowledge that there are such moments in life, worth all the rest, which remain as the master-lights of all our being, which strengthen us in our weakness and comfort us in our sorrow. They are sent to teach us to "go up higher."

It is not to be expected that we shall forever remain on the elevations we are competent sometimes to reach. We have hours of perfect peace, insight, courage, followed by

other hours of routine, of hard work, of discomfort, of impatience,— hours in which we almost forget that God or man has ever loved us. Be thankful that, though we may thus forget God, he does not forget us. And be thankful if you know by your own experience that there is such a thing as peace and love, even though you may for the time have lost them. You have not really lost them, if you have ever really had them. God never takes back his gifts. If he ever gave you a sight of his truth and love, you have it still. Clouds may pass between you and the sun; but the sun is there, and will shine forth again. It may be a stormy night, and the stars are hidden; but they shine on, permanent and pure, behind the driving rain, and will again look out upon you with their calm eyes, and say, from their inaccessible and infinite heights, "Be patient, little child! be patient! and wait till all storms and all darkness shall have passed away forever."

December 23.

WE want no better world than this, no better opportunities than we have here. But we need a new spirit of faith and love, in order that God's kingdom shall come and his will be done in this world, making this a heaven. This heaven must begin in our own hearts, or it will be no heaven to us. That is why it is said, "Unless a man be born again" (or rather, "be born from on

high"), "he cannot see the kingdom of God." Put him in an outward heaven, and he will not see it. Surround him with hosts of angels, and he does not see them. Fill his ears with the songs of seraphs, and he knows nothing of that divine melody. Until he allows the spirit of truth and love to enter his own soul and make an inward heaven, no outward heaven can do him any good.

This new heaven and new earth, full of righteousness, peace, and love, belong to us all: that is the gospel; that is the good news. The grace of God which brings salvation has appeared to all men. Christ has died for all men, and the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal. You need not wait till some miracle has converted you, or till some vast change has taken place in you. You have already the seeds of the new life in you by the Christian truths you have been taught, and the Christian influence under which you have lived. All you have to do is to walk in, through the open door, into the love of God and man. Believe you can do it, and you can do it.

December 24.

FIRST the new heavens, then the new earth,— this is the order by which life comes down. First the new earth, then the new heavens,— this is the order by which human effort goes up. For our work begins with what is around us, doing good to our

next-door neighbor, and widening out the circles of Christian activity. For our inspiration we go at once to the Most High, as the universal Father, and live in communion with him. So the new heavens will make a new earth; and earth, vivified by this influence, will be developed into the kingdom of heaven.

During the coming year Christ can make everything new in our souls, if we will let him do so. He can bring God so near to us that, instead of seeing a great and awful being, to be propitiated by prayers and humiliation, he shall seem better to us than the best friend, dearer and tenderer than the tenderest. We may come to feel habitually the influence of God in our souls, making all things new.

So, too, in our churches the same spirit can make all things new. So in society, in the State, in the world, the new heavens may this year make more and more of a new earth.

So, in the coming year, our nation, purified by trial, disciplined by difficulty, may begin to escape the snares and nets of selfish politicians, and learn to do justly, and to love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

December 25.

WHILE Easter gives hope of an immortal life, Christmas brings to us the hope of a better life in this world.

Every good gift is from above. But, as the year brings round this Christmas season, we can rejoice that God sent, in the fulness of

time, that eldest Son, our Elder Brother, who has gifts for all mankind.

The star of the magi still stands over every cradle. The angel song is heard in the heart of every parent. Christmas makes an aureole of heavenly light around all the infants in Christian lands.

Christmas is a presage of the time when wars shall cease; when the whole Church shall be one; when the Christ of love and truth shall be everywhere accepted, obeyed, and loved, and the knowledge of God shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

We rejoice in Christ's hope for mankind; we are happy in his brotherly love; we are led by him to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God; we join in the angels' song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

December 26.

THUS it is that immortality and heaven are coming, because they are already here. Thus it is that true worship, pure Christianity, humane religion, are sure to come to their full and ripe harvest, because they are already here in their seed and germ. So it is that the living experience and the deep convictions of the human heart are always a sure word of prophecy of the glory which is to be revealed; and the life which comes now from God and Christ is the promise and assurance of the life which is to come hereafter.

December 27.

AND so we realize that death is nothing; that we are already immortal; that the hour of immortal life cometh, and now is. Death ceases to exist to a Christian. He looks forward to the time when he shall fall asleep, and wake again, surrounded by all whom he loves and who love him,— by the spirits of the just made perfect.

That which Plato and Euripides *thought* possible, Jesus *saw* to be real; and so he said, "He who liveth and believeth in me shall never die." So he always called death sleep; so his disciples said that he had abolished death,— he took away its terror out of their hearts.

December 28.

WHEN you stood by the side of your loved ones during the last year, and bade them farewell, and said, "It is the last time," it was the last time, and the first time, too. It was the last time you saw them on earth, but the first time you thought of them in heaven. From that hour you have stood looking up into heaven; you have had another friend above; you have been made a companion of saints and angels. At such times we think with sorrow of how much more we might have done for our friends than we did, of opportunities forever gone which we might have used. No one looked on that cold face — a brother, sister, wife, father — without

saying in his heart, "Why did I not do more while I had him?" If you have felt so, then make use of that lesson by doing more for those who remain.

We are living at the end of an old epoch and the beginning of a new one. We can say, looking backward, "It is the last time"; "Upon us the ends of the world have come." Looking forward, we can say that we are spectators at the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. To-day, as then, he that sits on the throne makes all things new. Christ's coming is to take place in the year on which we are about to enter. He is to come to us all. To all of us it is the last time for many things, the first time for many other things. No hand on the horologue of time points the hour, no bell sounds it out from the skies. We see not any outward change from day to day. Yet each year takes away the old, and brings the new.

December 29.

HOW wonderful is life! Every moment we stand between two eternities. An infinite past comes to an end, and an infinite future begins. It all belongs to us, if we choose to have it. Let the dead past bury its dead. Let us, who are of the day, act like children of the day. Let us go forth to sow the seed of the future; to do something which shall be good and useful to some human

being; to make the world in some way better for our presence here. Each soul has its own faculty: it can help in some way to make the world more cheerful and more beautiful.

This it is which makes life worth living. If we are living only for ourselves, our own amusement, luxury, advancement, life is not worth living. But, if we are living as co-workers with Christ, as fellow-helpers with God, as part of the noble army of martyrs who bear witness to the truth in all time, then our lives are full of interest. This gives sweetness and strength to all our days. The last time has no gloom for us when it comes: it is the first time of something better.

But, to have this joy and strength, we must realize that God is with us, and working in us to will and to do. Faith in an ever-present power, ready to vitalize the soul whenever we open it to him; faith in an ever-present love, which will hold us in its all-embracing arms; in an all-surrounding providence, which will cause all things to work together for good; faith in an ever-present spirit, which will teach us what to say and do, give us peace, make us sources of good influence, save us from evil, inspire our hearts with generous and noble sentiment,—this faith will give all existence a charm, and help us to use all opportunities aright.

December 30.

THE year which has gone brought to us much, and took away much. Christ came to us this last year whenever truth came to us; whenever we saw clearly in our mind the reality of duty and love, of a religious life.

There is no necessary sadness in last times. The sun which sets on our horizon is rising on a western world. Every setting sun is also a rising sun. Every end is also a beginning. Every death is the beginning of another life.

If, then, we look backward on past opportunities, it is that we may look forward on new duties.

Opportunity goes, but inspiration comes. Time goes, but eternity comes: the human goes, the divine comes. The world passes away, and the fashion of it; but heaven comes,— the heaven of a better faith, loftier hope, more generous love, making all things new and fair.

December 31.

LET us thank God that there are many keys by which to open the blessed door which leads into the heavenly kingdom. To one the door is opened in childhood; and the little feet go in, and the small curly head is already surrounded with the pure glory of a light beaming from the presence of God. Another drops early the trivialities and follies of youth, and lifts deep, earnest eyes towards the great truths of life and time, of death and eternity.

One enters the kingdom by faithful work: loyalty to duty unlocks the door, and he goes in. One finds the key through temptation, sorrow, sin, remorse, penitence, turning to God in hopeless shame, but meeting hope and unexpected joy shed abroad in his heart. One rises from the bed of sickness with all of his past life closed behind him, and a new life, filled with purer hopes, opening upward into heaven. One is moved by the noble words, the holy life, and the rapt enthusiasm of the saints and martyrs, by the utterings of genius and the eloquence of fiery hearts, and follows, with enthusiastic love, their pathway, till they lead him to the mountain heights of holy truth.

Such are the different paths which lead us to God. So we come, at last, to Christ, the image of the invisible God. The air of heaven, even here, begins to fan our heated brow; the music of heaven comes softly down, mingling with our daily life; the light of the upper world shines into our poor human hearts. God be blessed for it all,—for all the sorrow, all the joy, all the experience of good and evil, light threads and dark threads shooting to and fro across the web of human life! Brothers and sisters,—dear friends of mine, fellow-workers in this wonderful world,—let us be fellow-helpers through it, till we meet on that higher shore, in that larger liberty, and with that fuller peace of rest and action which remains for God's children, beyond the low-arched gateway that mortals call death.

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